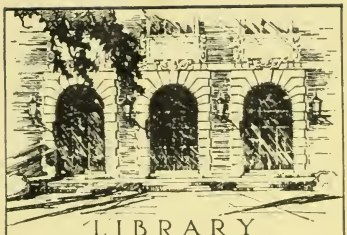

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A MAN'S FOES

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A MAN'S FOES.

BY

E. H. STRAIN.

'A man's foes shall be they of his own household.'

VOL. I.

LONDON:
WARD, LOCK & BOWDEN, LIMITED,
WARWICK HOUSE, SALISBURY SQUARE, E.C.
NEW YORK AND MELBOURNE.
1895.
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PREFACE.

THE main facts upon which this tale is founded are sufficiently well known; and the writer has spared no pains to ensure truth in the details, so far as careful research and comparison of authorities enable one to arrive at it. Needless to say, there are many conflicting statements and opinions to harmonize; but about the hardships and privations endured in Derry during the siege of 1689 all the authorities are agreed; as well as about the splendid gallantry and constancy with which both citizens and garrison behaved throughout that trying time. The writer may say with confidence that these are in no way overcharged.

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A MAN'S FOES

CHAPTER I.

BEGINNING, IRISH FASHION, AT THE END OF THE STORY.

STRANGE and very strange it is to reflect upon the changes that one year, one very short year with twelve little months in it, may bring forth. A foam-bell on a stormy sea, were it endowed with sense and memory, might have some such experiences as ours to recall at the end of its day of life. Now on the crest of the wave, now in the trough; now sliding up the slope of the tossing water, now sliding down; now sparkling in a flying ray of sunshine, now dark in the sudden gloom; whelmed under the plunging wave one moment, the next slipping into the free light once more, and in the next after that whirled, perhaps, clean into the air by the wind. The likeness is apt enough between

such an existence as this and the life we have been leading for the last twelve months.

A year; and that of the shortest, as it seems when I look back upon it; and yet what long days have been therein—days that seemed to hold months of ordinary life; yes, and that will count for more in our lives than months of ordinary life. Perhaps it needed more than the strength that will carry one through months of quietness to live through one such day; perhaps our lives have been shortened by just so much. And yet, could the choice be allowed one, to have been in the thick of the fight or quite out of it — a foam-bell on the crest of the wave, or a foam-bell on the eddy of a sheltered brook, where hardly even the sound of the storm can reach it—would one choose the calm? I would not, woman though I be; for such days as these were filled—ay, to overflowing—with real life; it was worth living to have the chance of such. And that which hath been done is worth the casting away of a dozen lives, if one had them; how mean and inglorious seems the common round of daily business after the fate of a nation hath hung upon our actions! And yet how sweet and gracious is the orderly succession of daily duties, tame and trivial though they be. It doth seem to me that I never so much enjoyed

the rarest junketing and holiday-making before our troubles, as I now do the ordering of my family and the arranging of my house. Interruption and derangement do give a new zest to everyday interests, that is certain ; as that little foam-bell might be figured, after its day of storm, to find blessed rest in the calm that had only wearied it before.

I said something like this to Margery, my maid, who came into my chamber as I sat with paper and ink before me, ready to begin to write.

'Our storm left much wreckage behind it, and caused much devastation,' said I. 'But the wreckage is well-nigh cleared away, and soon the havoc will be all repaired. Even the very gray hairs, which you were so grieved to see in my head, will soon disappear, I think.'

I spoke something gaily, for Margery doth keep so grave a face that I am sorry for her ; nor doth it indicate a right sense of all the mercies of Providence towards us. If we have suffered, have we not been richly repaid ?

She came up to me before she answered, and pushed back my hair, looking to see if that which I had said were true.

'I should not wonder, madam,' said she. 'Peace and happiness work wonders.'

'Peace and happiness would almost seem to

make the years run backwards, wouldn't they?' said I. 'What haggard old, grief-stricken creatures we seemed, both you and I, when we came back to Cloncally three months ago! And yet now, though no doubt we have lost much that we shall never regain, we don't seem to have lost our youth, after all; for that is coming back to us.'

'You may get back your round cheeks and your pretty colour, madam,' said Margery; 'and even your hair may come back to what it was, who knows? but your eyes will never be what they were—never. They used to sparkle like the sun on the lough,' said this foolish woman, who used to think far too highly of my looks, and now doth think far too highly of me. 'And now,' says she, 'they're not the eyes of a young woman at all.'

'What,' said I, 'are they so spoilt as that?' And being, I fear, for all we have come through, but a vain woman still, I bade her give me from my table a little mirror, that I might look at them. Then I said: 'I don't think they look so wonderfully old, Margery, after all. I believe they could sparkle yet, if ye were to try a bit of flattery.' For I wanted to get a smile from her.

'Ah, they're a bit sunken,' said she; 'but it's not that. 'Tis the years that are to come that

one can see in them, more than the years that are past! There's a look in them now,' says she, beginning to shed tears, 'that I'll know you by in heaven, when I see you there; faith, madam, 'tis not age you have in your eyes, but immortality.'

'There, there, now, Margery! you've fairly beat yourself at praising me,' said I, trying to make a joke of it, but 'twas of no use. She cried, and I cried too—partly for sympathy, and partly because even my waiting-woman, with all her partiality, could not help showing me that mine eyes were no longer as pretty as they once were.

'In truth,' I said through the shower, 'our immortality was very near us in those last days of the siege, wasn't it? Our hearts were so full of it that we could not keep it all out of our faces; though death,' said I by an after-thought, 'put his sign-manual there as well, to witness his prior claim.'

''Twas the thing that kept us living, the thought of our immortality,' said Margery.

'And it was pretty near all we had to live on!' I could not help rejoining, though I know that Margery hates flippancy. She is no longer like a servant to me; nor was she formerly a mere ordinary servant, being a connection, though a poor and very distant one, of my

husband's family. But when mistress and maid have passed together through such perils and privations as have happened to us, there is thenceforward a bond of friendship between them, as well as of service rendered and received. Therefore I drew Margery's face down to mine and gave her a little kiss of peace before I sent her out of my chamber, to give me solitude for my writing. It hath ever been a tendency of mine to give to serious matters a streak, as it were, of a smile; and whether it be innocent and rather praiseworthy than evil (as making them bear less heavily on the spirits), or altogether a snare, I have never been able rightly to make up my mind. But even in the depths of our troubles there were times when I could not quite govern my tongue into seriousness; but now and then a saying that had the savour of a jest would escape me in my own despite.

At the first, when we came back into this our house of Cloncally, and were here established, I was all eagerness to begin the writing down of my remembrances; yet now there have passed nigh upon three months, and to-night is the first time that I have taken pen in hand for the purpose. To be sure, there hath been much to see to, much to set in order; for our house, though it was not altogether dismantled,

like so many that neighbour it, had yet suffered severely by the occupation of the enemy, having had a garrison of them posted therein. And what such housekeepers as these were like to make of their abode, sure anybody can tell well enough, without description from me. Oh, my pretty withdrawing-room, with its chairs of tapestry-work, wrought by the hands of my dear mother and aunts; with the spinet and the beautiful Italian cabinet that Captain Hamilton caused to be brought from London, all the way, to adorn our home withal; not to mention the gewgaws and chaney that his mother gave us! What a state it was in when I came back to it out of Derry! The costly hangings of Italian silk, that were a present from my lord Duke, my husband's kinsman and friend, sent to us from his palace in Scotland, I had fortunately saved, taking them with me among my mails when we removed into the city before the siege. But the floor that was the pride of Margery's heart for its shining (which to maintain cost the maids so much hard rubbing with the cicely seeds from the river-bank)—'twas of the same colour as the road to the waterside of Derry, and not a whit brighter; and the staircase of polished oak was in the same condition. Throughout the house everything was in like case, as was to be expected; but the rest of the

furniture, being more solid than that in my closet, it hath suffered less actual damage, and is now restored to something like its former state. My pretty silk hangings are once more in their old places; many of the other things have been repaired marvellous neatly; some pieces even of the chaney have been found, and Margery hath mended them with a mysterious stuff that she makes from the pounded lime of shells, mixed with the white of an egg, and I know not what else. They will scarce bear handling, but they stand in their old places. Everywhere, to be sure, there are scars and scratches—you can see them when you look for them—nor would I wish to be rid of them entirely, they being, as it were, a kind of written history. But to a casual eye the house appears but little different from what it was a year ago—on the day, to wit, that my Lord Mountjoy came to it with my husband out of Derry, to sup here and lie all night, on his way to Dublin.

Whenever I find myself disposed to murmur at the destruction that hath been wrought in my house, I have nothing more to do than to think of the case of so many of our neighbours, whose houses are for the most part either burnt down or sacked to the bare walls. By what means ours escaped the like treatment I

do not know. 'Tis true that a person of very great consideration was quartered here for a time—no less than the French Ambassador himself. But since I have heard that the very headquarter residence itself — Sir Matthew Bridge's house of Brookhall, to wit—was razed to the ground by the Irish army at its leaving, I well perceive that this cannot have been the reason it was spared. And, indeed, from all I can learn of Monsieur le Comte d'Avaux, he is one much more like to have counselled the destruction of any place that might harbour us, and even urged it, than to have said a word in favour of leaving it standing, he counting all that have borne arms against King James the enemies of King Louis as well. Howsoever the marvel is to be explained, it is a truth that we have a roof to cover us, and under it no small share of the conveniences of life, and when I hear murmuring from any of my people, I spare not to point them to the numbers of poor neighbours who are every day at our doors imploring succour, persons that were every one of them in the possession of a good competency before the war. No doubt their losses will be all made up to them ere long, and more, for none can doubt that their Majesties King William and Queen Mary (God bless them!) have the will to be not only just but generous,

as witness his Majesty's gracious letter that was read in the Diamond of Derry in the early days of the month of September. But in the meantime they suffer much hardship and many privations; and it is much my will to be very sparing in our own proper outlays, that so we may have the more power to give them relief. Having come together through so great rigour and straitness, sure 'tis a pleasure at one's very heart to share prosperity with them that were our fellow-sufferers.

It is indeed one of my dearest blessings that I have the wherewithal to be serviceable to these poor friends; nor should I have had so much had I not plucked up a spirit to withstand Major-General Kirke, our very tardy deliverer, in his exactions. For as soon as he had fairly succoured Derry—that I should ascribe it to him, who, for aught that hath appeared, had more the will to look on at its destruction than to make any honest endeavour to relieve it!—no sooner, at any rate, was the city relieved, than the Major-General sent parties of soldiers in all directions to seize the cattle and sheep that remained to the country people, upon the pretence that they were the abandoned booty of the enemy. Why he did a thing so tyrannous none can say, save that it hath ever been his wont to pillage upon any

pretext or none. To be sure, it brought great plenty into Derry. Perhaps he thought that in the sudden abundance the people might forget the famine that had there been endured so lately, mainly through his tardiness. If this was his reason, he had better have let it alone, for the common people throughout all the district have been reduced to such extremity thereby, that now they say King James's soldiers are better neighbours by far than King William's. And the welfare of the province hath been so undermined that, now that all he gathered together hath been consumed in the city, there is but little in the country that can be brought into market, so that there is again a scarcity, not in the city only, but all around it in the country as well. And thus for every good word that Kirke got in Derry in the time of plenty, he now gets ten hard ones in the city, and an hundred in the country. And that is much more his due, as I think, than praise for anything he hath ever done here in Ireland.

In due course, as was to be looked for, these legalized marauders came to my house of Cloncally, where there was, one way and another, a considerable number of cattle. When we were forced to go into Derry before the siege, we left our stock in the charge of some known dependents and tenants, who chose rather to

remain without the city and take protection from the enemy. Much of our young cattle we sent away into the hill-country, where they still are; but as soon as we were known to be at home again, those that had the charge of our cattle sent them back—such of them, at least, as the enemy had spared to seize. Thus we had a goodly number both of cattle and sheep when General Kirke's marauders came our way.

I could not imagine what there was to do that morning, what with the lowing of bestial and shouting of men in the courtyard without, and the tumult of voices within the house. I was still in my chamber, not having finished dressing, and Margery was with me; so I sent her to bring me some account of the noise. She had scarce had time, as I thought, to reach the kitchen, when she was back again, bringing with her Jenny Hunter, the dairymaid—a woman that hath her full share of sense and faculty, as she hath more than once shown. She had been waiting my convenience in the kitchen for some time, as she told me. I promise you I quickly gave orders that will hinder the like from happening again. The convenience of a mistress is a thing that may well give way to the welfare of her household.

Poor Jenny, between rage and fright, had quite lost the power to make herself under-

stood. She began a jumbled lament about the English soldiers, and Polly and Biddy, and Nelly and Rosy, that told me nothing at all. I made her sit down, even in my presence, assuring her that things could not be so bad but that something might be done to mend them, would she but collect herself and tell me clearly what was amiss.

'Auch, madam, the beautiful cattle!' said she; 'sure we'll niver see them again, and them beginning to be fat and nice again. Auch, and two of them in full milk, too, when milk's so scarce, goin' to be sold for beef at a penny a pound in Derry!'

And at that she broke out once more into sobbing and crying, so that I could make nothing of her at all.

'Jenny, Jenny,' said I, 'something has certainly muddled your wits this morning. What is it? Can't ye tell me plainly what's wrong? I'm not going to sell my cows, either at a penny a pound or a shilling a pound, so make your mind easy.'

'Sell them, madam! No, indade,' said she. 'It's not yourself that 'll have the chance either to sell them or to kape them. There's about a score of English soldiers gatherin' them into droves even now, to drive them into Derry for beef to the town.'

'Nonsense!' said I; 'that can't be true, for I've received no letter of requisition; and if I had, there are young beasts enough to send without killing our milk kine.'

''Tis even too true, madam,' said Margery, who had been down again to gather news, seeing how unfit Jenny was to tell them—''tis even too true,' quoth she. 'There's a party of the English soldiers below in the yard that say they have General Kirke's orders to bring away all the live stock they can lay hands on, pretending that 'tis all the booty of the Irish army, and must therefore be the spoil of the conquerors.'

At this I bethought me that Colonel Mitchelburne, our late military commander in Derry, would be aware if this was within the right of our defenders, as they scrupled not to call themselves. The Colonel lay at Cloncally that night—'twas shortly before his departure for England—and I sent Margery to desire he would favour me with a minute's conversation as quick as might be; and that he did, being with me in a very few moments. Jenny by this time had got back her senses, and was able to tell him all that had occurred. He straightway assured me that Kirke had no right—save the right of the strong hand—to take from me a horn or a hoof that was my husband's, save

upon clear necessity shown, and then to give me his bill of indebtedness for all that was taken without payment made.

Upon that assurance I was for hastening straight to the courtyard to expostulate with the officer commanding the foraging party; but Margery would have me delay till she brought me the hood and negligée that I wear when I go abroad in the mornings.

'For if you will speak to these rude men,' said she, 'sure you must neither be flustered nor appear to be in haste, but show the same authority that you have among your own servants.'

It chafed me to be hindered, even for a moment; but I have thought since that it was she was the wise one that time, not I. It is certain that a woman can do nothing to put herself at greater disadvantage in treating with men than to show any discomposure of manner, or any appearance of contending with them. If she be dignified and quiet, and show no doubt of their desire to serve her, they will scarce fail to show her that courtesy which is her due; such, at least, hath been my experience. But in my sudden heat of indignation, thinking that in my husband's necessary absence they were about to plunder him and me (for, having heard nothing of

the exactions practised on my neighbours, truly I thought this to be a case by itself), I felt in myself the spirit to have chidden the armed soldiers like naughty children; and had done it, too, but for Margery, and thereby, no doubt, lost much.

My composure, thus assumed with my hood and negligée, was nigh to failing me when I saw the milch cows from the farmyard, and the young cattle and stock from the pasture, driven pell-mell into the courtyard, huddled and hustled together into droves, in preparation for being driven away altogether. My heart came into my very throat to think how it had fared with me and with all of us had I been timid and diffident of opposing mine own will to the will of others, as women are for the most part, and as I myself used to be. Then had I certainly stood still, with indignation burning in my heart and in mine eyes, no doubt, but with never a word to say to hinder them from stripping me of what I had to support my family and household withal, and that without reason given or payment so much as promised. But since my marriage my husband's frequent absences from home have forced me to acquire the habit of governing his people; thus I felt my duty, and knew my right, to require a reason for these arbitrary measures. As to the military

dress and arms, they awed me not at all. Six months' experience of the like in Derry had shown me for certain that they covered flesh and blood much similar to those of ordinary men.

I therefore called to me one of the soldiers that was nearest, bidding him desire his commanding officer to speak with me, and presently there came to me a man gray-headed and weather-beaten, that had neither the bearing nor seeming that belonged to one that held his Majesty's commission ; nor did he, being but a corporal.

Such were the persons empowered by Kirke to deprive us at their will of our substance. Sure there were men even in King James's army that had thought it their duty to show greater care of the well-being of conquered enemies, let alone their loyal fellow-subjects that they were sent to protect. But I am bound to say for this man that he treated me with all respect.

I asked him of his errand—whether it were for the service of the garrison at Derry he was collecting my cattle, to which he answered 'Yes.' Then I desired him that he would serve me with the letter, stating how many cattle I was asked to provide them withal, and upon whose authority the requisition was made.

At that he seemed something confused, but made answer presently that he brought no such paper as I spoke of.

'But,' said he, 'it is by the orders and authority of Major-General Kirke, military Governor of Londonderry, that I take possession of the cattle.'

'Then,' said I to him, 'tell me how many cattle he hath bidden you to require of me, and I will order mine own people to choose them and deliver them to you, you giving me, of course, your receipt for the same.'

The man seemed yet more taken aback than at the first.

'Madam,' said he, after muttering something to himself that was not meant for mine ears, 'I am not required by my orders to give receipts for the cattle I collect, nor is there a number appointed me to ask. It hath come to the ears of the General,' said he, gathering assurance, 'that all the cattle in these parts is nothing but the stock that was abandoned by the Irish army in its retreat, which the country people have taken for their own use, a thing that can by no means be permitted, for by all the rules of war the booty of a routed army belongs to the conquerors. The General hath therefore sent us out to bring it in.'

The man tried to speak roundly, but was let

by his conscience; for well he knew the falsehood of that which, as he said, had been told to the General. I answered him very quietly.

'Then the General is misinformed,' said I. 'For there is not an animal you see here but is the undoubted property of Captain Hamilton, my husband. They were all bestowed in safe keeping while the Jacobite army was here, as can be proved by many witnesses. Anyone that knows Mr. Hamilton—and there are enough of his acquaintance in Derry,' said I, 'to speak to his reputation—will tell General Kirke whether we are like to refuse anything we have that is required for the public service, so it be duly asked of us and the need for it shown. But this is illegal exaction, and I leave it to yourself to say if I should submit to it.'

I finished in my very gentlest voice, which was none so easy for me to compass, for ever and anon there came a sound into it, in my own despite, that was pure defiance, and even to mine own ear said plainly, 'Do it if you dare!' But I fought against this with all my might, for it is not the way to succeed with men that have weapons in their hands, to dare them to the thing they have a mind to do.

The corporal looked at me, and then at the cattle, and last of all he looked at his boots.

He seemed to be suffering an extremity of discomfort. At the last he said :

'This is all very well for you, madam, but I hardly know how it will sound in the General's ears, that a party sent by him to bring in cattle have left the best lot—Gad! by very much the best lot—they have come across, at the bidding of a lady.'

'You had better consider likewise,' said I very calmly, but in spite of myself my voice sounded something stern, 'how it will sound in King William's ears that his liege subjects, so lately dwelling in the very shadow of death for his service, have been violently deprived of their substance without so much as a plea of necessity made.'

'Yes, yes, madam,' said the man, looking up upon a sudden ; 'this is all very well—very well indeed. Ye say the cattle are all yours, and no doubt so you think. But how,' says he, 'am I to know that it's true ?'

This was putting me into a corner, as one might say, for, indeed, I knew not how to prove that these identical animals were our own, though of the number returned by each person that had charge of a parcel of them I could aesily have rendered an exact account ; and sure the tally he might have made out for himself well enough. But here spoke up Jenny

Hunter, who, seeing me so composed, had grown composed herself.

'Sure,' said she to him, 'an you'll have the kindness to bid them red-coats leave alone the milch cows, I'll soon let you see if they're our own, any way.'

Then she began to call to them in the outlandish jargon that she doth use to bring them to her out of the field, the creatures raising and turning their heads forthwith, as those that knew the call. Then, they being no longer restrained and threatened of the soldiers, she called to each by its name, and as she called they came to her one by one, save that the last of them grew impatient, and ran to her all at once, not waiting to be called.

'Will ye open the door of the byre, Teddy?' she said then to a man of ours that was near her.

And he set it open. Then she began another chant, as barbarous as the first; but at the sound of it, the animals, understanding it, filed orderly and quiet into the byre, each taking her own place and standing there ready to be fastened up for the milking.

'Will that content ye, ye reaving ruffians?' said she, which insult might easily have undone the good effect of my gentleness, had they perfectly understood it.

Then Teddy stepped up, and said that he thought that some of the young cattle he had tended might follow his voice, if I pleased he should try. But the corporal declared himself satisfied. Therefore, as I judged it well to have his good word with General Kirke, I sent him into the kitchen to break his fast; for the men I gave orders that something should be brought to them where they were. Teddy spoke up before them all, and told me that five or six young animals had been sent away under the charge of two troopers before I came out into the yard. I cared not to press for the restitution of these, lest by trying for over-much I should lose all. I made Master Corporal Simkins (for that was the name of him) give me his receipt for them, however, Cargill, my servant, writing both the paper and the corporal's name, as he could not do so much for himself; and he making his mark, which was duly attested by two witnesses. This paper, though I still possess it, hath never brought me in a penny as yet; nor do I care to press that either, being well content to postpone mine own just claims to those of others, my neighbours, who have been bereft of all their substance, or near it.

I shall scarce get me to the siege, I fear, if I spend so much time in telling beforehand what

hath come after it, which is, as they say in this part of the country, but an Irish way of making a beginning. But I cannot forbear to relate how I found the Colonel and Margery ensconced beneath the little window that gives light to the passage into the kitchen, whence they had listened to every word that had been said; and had taken a peep from time to time, as they judged it safe, at what was passing in the yard. The Colonel had his pistols loaded and laid ready to his hand, and had not hesitated to interpose therewith on my behalf, had he thought the men likely to molest me. It was fortunate on all accounts that this was unnecessary.

If praise could have made me forget my inward tremors of rage and defiance, and the pain I had to keep them under in my speech, I had it in plenty; they went about to puff me up like a wind-bag with their flattery, Colonel Mitchelburne and Margery. 'Twas something, no doubt, to be assured that whatever my feelings were my conduct was what it should be—the effect also was what I desired—yet to Jenny Hunter was due no small part of the credit of this, for, certes, without her I had made but a poor demonstration of my ownership of the cattle, and Margery's good thought of the hood and negligée should not be for-

gotten. I told her so, and rallied her, saying that her praise of me was but as a bait put forth to catch praise for her own wisdom.

'Faith, madam, an you will say so,' quoth she, dropping her demure curtsey, 'I will say that none of us has any credit at all in the matter, but only the morning air and the vexation that hath put a colour into your cheeks that's like their own. Ah,' says she, 'I'd be well enough pleased to have a visit from the soldiers every morning if that might keep you looking so like yourself.'

'Peace, silly!' said I. 'Don't make me blush for your folly, before the Colonel, too.'

'I'm sure he'll bear me out in it,' said Margery, all of a sudden run mad, as it seemed. 'Send but now for that corporal, madam, and I warrant he'll offer to send an express after the cattle that are halfway to Derry by this time if you ask him.'

'I like not this fooling, Margery,' said I to her, a little ruffled; and at that she held her peace.

But as to the colour she spoke of, it had not quite left my faded cheeks when I went to my chamber after breakfast, and could see myself in the glass. I was fool enough and vain enough to rejoice thereat, though I spared not to rate Margery for the liberty she had given

to her tongue when the Colonel had left us in the afternoon.

He rid to Glendermot that same day, at my special request, which I made because I feared that it might come to the ears of Kirke that he had been at Cloncally when I had withstood his messengers. He might then have given it such a colour as to make it appear that the Colonel had influenced me in what I did, and this, no doubt, had been to his disadvantage (that had disadvantage enough without it), to appear as one in open opposition to his successor. Military governor and civil likewise—for Mr. Walker was gone to London, and Kirke had stepped into his shoes as well as Colonel Mitchelburne's — there was none to come between him and the victims of his rapacity. These were we; it was as his prey he viewed us, and not as faithful subjects put into his ward for our own benefit. Or if he thought otherwise, then did his conduct very much belie him.

CHAPTER II.

HOW THE LORD VISCOUNT MOUNTJOY LAY AT CLONCALLY ON HIS WAY TO DUBLIN.

I BEGAN this narrative of our troubles by reflecting on this strange thing—that where circumstances seem most ordered and stable around us, as if they might go on in their customary round till the end of time, then on a sudden comes a change, and after that change upon change succeeds, so that, could we but have foreseen the turmoil, our very wits had been turned topsy-turvy with thinking of it. Here is another strange thing, now, when one thinks upon it—that there is not in our hearts the least inkling of what is coming upon us. One might think that we men might have an inner warning of the storm, as beasts and birds perceive the approach of the thunder before the tempest bursts about their ears—nay, the very daisies in the grass and the yellow pilewort under the hedge do know to shut them-

selves against the coming of a shower. But it is not so with man.

Sure, there was not another woman in Ulster busier than I, nor happier in what she was about, on the very day when the first tiny cloud came up on our horizon; not near so big as a man's hand, it seemed, but rather like a fleck of sunshine made visible, or like to one of those gold and scarlet specks that the sun doth leave in the sky after his setting on the clearest evenings of summer. When the prophet sent his servant to scan the sky the first time, I wonder if there was upon the face of it such another little golden cloud, not to be known of such a messenger for what it was because of the brightness it was steeped in. Had Elijah gone himself to look, would even he have recognised the herald of abundance of rain, I wonder? Or would he, too, have been deceived until it gathered blackness, though still so small and so far off? We are but purblind poor creatures, we mortals; and as for the gift of prophecy, it hath departed out of the world.

It was the visit of my Lord Mountjoy to Cloncally that was the harbinger of evil, though at the time it seemed nothing else than a pleasure and an honour. Nay, it seemed not only, but so it undoubtedly was, that my husband's commanding officer should grace

our poor house with his presence; not but that Mr. Hamilton can count among his kinsfolk men as great as he, and greater—and these none so distant kinsmen, neither—but that doth nothing lessen the courtesy my Lord Viscount did us in becoming our guest—a courtesy I rated very high, and much desired to show my sense of it in his entertainment.

To this end I busied myself, as I said but a moment ago, not leaving Margery to arrange all matters, as she commonly doth, but seeing to things myself; it was scarce needful, yet it was pleasant to me, and, in truth, there was enough for everyone to do to have all things in the readiness that I thought fit for my Lord Viscount and his company. He could scarce expect, in the house of a simple gentleman, that state to which he is accustomed; but I desired he should lack nothing either of comfort or of observance. We have no pretension to entertain with magnificence, like greater folk, but in our own degree we might hope to compass completeness; and so, indeed, I believe we did. 'Tis ever a matter of carefulness with me that my husband be not shamed in his household, but the contrary; the more especially that he took me from a family lower in station than his own.

At last everything was ready, both above

stairs and below; nothing more remained to be seen to, unless I should have stood over the cook as she over her spits and stewpans. The sun had come out sweetly after a morning that was raw and cloudy, though seasonable, for sure in October we must expect such weather, and this was the twentieth of October last, a year ago and a week to the very day. Dear! how clear that day doth stand out in my memory, in spite of all that hath come and gone since then; as clear as though the week alone had passed, and the year were clean blotted out and gone.

Wamphray's wife, my dear sister Rosa (though sister by marriage and not by blood), was with me, she having ridden out of Derry with her little son James and his nursemaid to pass a week at Cloncally; and I proposed to her that, having an hour to spare, we should walk as far as to the garden, a thing which she was nothing loath to do. For in the whole county there was no other garden like ours as it was then, before King James's soldiers had made havoc of it; such lilies, late and early, such cowslips of all kinds and colours, such pansies, such gilliflowers, such roses in their season, and such good vegetables and fruits into the bargain. 'Twas the pride of the heart of Rabbie Wilson, the old Scotch gardener, that learned his trade in Scotland, in

the gardens of my Lord of Hamilton, but hath been at Cloncally longer than any of us, longer even than Captain Hamilton, whom he can remember in his boyish days. Rabbie is but a simple man, one that pretends to nothing beyond his station, yet there are few things pertaining to the management of a garden that he is ignorant of; and, if he had but the learning, I am sure he hath the knowledge to make as good a book on the subject as Master Parkinson's 'Paradise.'

Rosa and I walked through the most of the garden before ever we cast eyes on him, however; at the last we caught sight of him upon his knees, in the midst of a patch of new-turned earth, just where the ground begins to slope towards the wilderness that abuts upon the river. He lifted his head and gave us a look that scarce seemed of welcome, but loosed his apron that he wore, and came towards us forthwith; and when I asked him what he was a-doing, he began to explain that he was setting some shoots of strawberry of a rare and fine kind, newly brought from the plantations in Virginia.

'Suckers,' said he, 'that were sent me but yesterday frae the Duke's gardener, Master Anderson. He says they're grand fruit, twice as big as the common sort, or maybe mair; so I'm gi'en them every chance, the best o' the

sun an' the best o' the soil. I'd be laith to fa' short o' Master Anderson's weight frae the same number o' plants, gin the bearin'-time comes. But what's your leddyship's wull?' for it is as 'my ladyship' that Rabbie persists in addressing me. 'Is there aucht wantit for the hoose? Margery's been at me a dizzen times the day, an' a hale clamjamfray o' lasses oot o' the kitchen as weel, no to mention Annot hersel', that should ken better. It's "Rabbie, hae ye on'y chives?" the noo, an' "Rabbie, hae ye on'y chervil?" the next time. Dod, but 'twould save a heap o' fash if they'd tak' a thocht an inch or twa ayont their noses, an' no come taiglin' me ance errant ilka errant.'

Here was a well-ordered tongue, forsooth, in an ancient good servant; but the truth is that Rabbie, like Margery, is a privileged person. Thus, instead of taking him to task for his over-freedom, I found me presently craving his patience for Margery and the maidens, and Annot his wife, as if it had lain in his mouth to chide any of them but the last.

'You must even forgive them, Rabbie, this morning,' said I. 'It's not every day we have a great company of lords and baronets and such-like grand folks to sup at Cloncally;' for, indeed, I had bidden a goodly company of our neighbours to supper to meet my Lord Mount-

joy. 'Tis no more than nature that they should be something carried away by it.'

'Like eneuch, like eneuch,' muttered the old man. 'A pack o' hellicat hizzies, when a's said, saving your leddyship's presence. But what's your wull wi' me?' asked he, with a backward glance, in his own despite, as it were, at his strawberry plants.

'Ah, Rabbie,' said I to him, 'I see well that you desire I should know that I have hindered your work as well as the maid-servants.'

'Na, na!' said the old man quickly. 'Fient a hait! it's aye a pleesure to ser' yoursel'. No but I'd hae likit to finish the settin' while my han' was in it, an' sic a fine sappy day for the purpose,' finished he, compelled by his obstinate honesty, which a little irks me, even while I respect it.

But I forgave him presently when he was cutting for me, with a liberal hand, the best of the flowers the season had left him: the late gillyflowers, the marigolds, the hollyhocks, and bunches of those wonderful pink roses that he hath, that bloom both early in the year and late; an armful of sweets. At last we had as many as we could carry; we took them within doors, and filled with them both bowls and beau-pots, which we took and set in the with-drawing-room, and likewise in the hall windows.

How sweet they smelt when we had placed them, clean smothering the savour of the confection of rose-leaves that I use to keep in all my rooms for its fragrance! Presently after that it was time for us to dress, ready to receive my guests; and, truly, we had but barely finished when the first of them arrived—Adam Murray, my cousin, who had not done answering our questions about the good folks at Glendermot, when I had warning from my heart of Captain Hamilton's approach. I am often so when one that I love dearly is near me; some inner sense doth give me knowledge of his presence before the bodily ear can hear him, or the bodily eye espy him. But the sound of the horses' feet was clear enough to any ear but a deaf one by the time we got to the door, and in another minute they came in sight—five of them. There was but just time to cast a glance right and left to see that all were in their places—the grooms to take the horses, Cargill and Margery behind myself—before they were with us, riding up to the door at a swinging trot. Then came the bustle of dismounting; Cargill running to hold his master's stirrup, as in duty bound, who was off his horse without waiting for any aid, and hastening to render the like courtesy to my Lord Mountjoy; which was his bounden duty likewise, both as a

host to his guest and as a soldier to his superior officer. But my lord himself was off his horse in the twinkling of an eye, and came up to me with his beaver in his hand, greeting me by the name of the Rose of Derry, which is a foolish title that the young men of the town bestowed upon me long ago, before my marriage. I felt my face redden as I smiled.

'Ah, my lord,' said I, ''tis a long time since I have heard that old name, and it brings me in mind of old times. But here is a lady that's able to deprive me both of the style and title, having a baptismal right to them, as well as one plainly to be seen in her face. Will your lordship permit me to present you to my sister, Mrs. Murray?'

Lord Mountjoy bowed twice very low; but he must ever have his answer.

'Faith, madam,' said he, 'she shall have her own style and title, and none of yours; for 'twere more like her if her godfather and godmothers at her baptism had named her the Lily. She shall be called the Lily of the Valley, and you shall still be the Rose of Derry.'

My sister upon this pretty speech took a tint so exquisite, as she greeted him, that I marvel he did not revoke his words the next instant after they were uttered. But I, leaving him to greet

Adam Murray, whom he knew, turned to welcome the other gentlemen ; my husband last of all, which, though it be but ordinary courtesy, and the behaviour of any well-nurtured woman, is sure a piece of manners most irksome and unnatural to practise.

In a very short time after that I had my hands full enough, receiving my guests and making them welcome. My Lord Massareene was next, with Mr. Skeffington, his son, still in mourning both of them for my lady, that died last year; and after them my Lady Hamilton, my husband's aunt, whom I was most happy to see—she came, as I afterwards understood, in her great state carriage, with her two gentlemen pages, that waited on her during supper. The order in which the rest of the guests arrived I now forget, and sure 'tis no great matter ; but all were assembled, and I in the instant expectation that supper should be announced, when Cargill came something mysteriously into the room. Indeed, being sure that he was about to say ' Madam is served,' I had actually risen from my chair to give the signal, when something in his face checked me. It passed through my mind that some disaster had befallen the supper, and, I promise you, it was no pleasant thought to a woman that was ambitious to be thought notable in her degree. But that which Cargill

came to tell me of was no disaster, but merely the arrival of another guest—one that had not been invited. It was Master Micaiah Browning, the brother of my sweet Rosa Murray, a sea-captain to his trade. I had met this gentleman but two or three times, for all he was brother to my brother's wife ; to be sure, though a person of condition and breeding, he is scarce of Captain Hamilton's standing, nor even of my brother's. Rosa, for all her beauty, comes of no great family, though of one that is good enough. But, like myself, she hath married above her own degree ; though certainly so gracious and lovely a creature might have wed with a king, and conferred a new grace upon his crown.

Little as I knew of her brother, I knew him for a gentleman that was equal to any company; in truth, I had been greatly struck with his manner, which had Rosa's winning dignity, mixed with an air of absolute command that was all his own ; and that I a little wondered to see, knowing that he had held no greater office than the command of a vessel, and that not even in the navy. Cargill told me that Captain Browning made some scruple about joining us, being only in an ordinary riding dress ; but I quickly sent Captain Hamilton to persuade him to put that scruple out of his mind.

'Tell him,' said I, 'that his sister is in such perfect looks to-night that no one will look past her face at the clothes of anyone else.'

'It's not the case!' said he in mine ear, being still very much my lover, as I pray God he may never lose the pretty trick. 'It's not the case; there's somebody else fixes my eyes, at any rate, and hath her full share of admiration from all the rest.'

'Ah, then!' said I, 'they have to look at their hostess, out of mere manners.'

'Madam,' says he with his low bow, 'sure 'tis partly a pleasure, judging by myself,' and then went straight to do mine errand to Mr. Browning, none having heard a word of what had passed save we ourselves, so great by this time was the buzz of talk become.

Presently I saw him re-enter the room, bringing Mr. Browning with him; they came but slowly towards me, the room being so crowded. Thus it came about that I was struck anew with the perfection of his manners, and this in the midst of that company, which, sure, was far beyond any he could be accustomed to. Yet, as Captain Hamilton presented him to some of the greatest persons present, which he could not help, when they made way for them to pass, anyone regarding had certainly said that here was the great man—the guest of the evening.

It was, in part, no doubt, his assured calmness that gave him such an air of greatness; yet there was no arrogance in it, only a power and stateliness that would not have misbecome a prince among his subjects. He had a habit, too, of looking a man straight and considerately in the eyes, that some found disconcerting. Colonel Lundy, in especial, my Lord Viscount's second in command, I remember, shuffled with his feet even under Mr. Browning's look; yet it lasted but an instant, no more. This is a thing most characteristic of a born leader of men, as I think; to be able to look through a man's eyes into his soul, and rate him at once at his proper worth.

I was pleased with him, but I think that Rosa's manner with him pleased me better yet. She had made a great impression. Mr. Clotworthy Skeffington, in especial, seemed greatly struck with her; but so, for the matter of that, was every other man in the room, though they had not, like him, the pleasure of holding her in talk at that moment. But in spite of his gallantry, which I make no doubt was great, there was some tinge of weariness upon her face, which I set down to Wamphray's absence. Admiration doth not fill the heart, and a feast that lacks the salt of one wished-for presence is but a savourless feast after all.

But the moment her brother came within her sight, all that was changed; her face grew as rosy as any bride's. There came into her eyes such a light as I had never seen in them before. She withdrew no jot of her attention from Mr. Skeffington, and yet any that had eyes in their heads could discern that she was conscious of Mr. Browning's presence from the top curl of her head-tire to the tip of her velvet shoe. I would fain hope that my own attention wandered not, so as to be seen; yet I noted this, and, what is more, I noted it with envy. There was no such feeling between Wamphray and me as this that lived between Rosa and Mr. Browning. We were close friends, as it is pity that brother and sister should ever be other; but for these two, the relation between them was a thing altogether by itself. 'Twas more like the tales that are recorded of twins than aught else that ever I saw; and yet they were no twins. On the contrary, Rosa was so much the younger that she might well have passed for Mr. Browning's daughter instead of his sister.

Being presented to Mr. Skeffington by Rosa, Mr. Browning joined in their talk, that I could hear had something to do with the disturbed state of affairs in England, whereof my Lord Massareene hath ever early news. But in a

moment after I heard so much, the supper was announced in earnest, and for an hour or more after that 'twas but little attention I paid to any of them, being most fully occupied with the two lords, that were seated the one on my right hand and the other on my left, as was, of course, their due. Faith, had I given them less of my notice, and more to the general drift of the talk, as was my plain duty in times so dangerous, it had been better for all of us in the long-run. And yet even now I scarce can blame myself, for my Lord Mountjoy had a vein of talk that night that had been enough to beguile the ear of a maid at her marriage. And then, there was not a Catholic present, nor any stickler for the high doctrine of the Right Divine; we were all to my knowledge of one mind on the questions of Protestantism and the Test Act, and the other subjects of danger, so that my watchfulness might well have winked, even had my lord been dull. There are Hamiltons Catholic and high loyalist, to be sure, but not one of them was present that night.

It was Rosa and Mr. Skeffington that drew our feet into the paths of danger at the last, she asking my Lord Massareene, from her place on the other side of the table, for some further account of the things his son had been telling

her of. To which he responded cautiously enough, no doubt, at first; but becoming heated with the subjects he handled, he threw prudence to the winds, and began to tell us instances of the King's infatuation that went beyond belief. Mr. Skeffington took up the ball on his side of the table, adding circumstances that my lord, his father, had forgotten, or perhaps had judged it wise to pass over.

More and more the company ceased to talk apart, and began to listen to these two; at last one took it on himself to doubt whether something my lord had said could be very fact; whereat Sir Arthur Rawdon struck in, declaring he had heard the same report as my Lord Massareene.

'But it may be a mere report—a story of a cock and a bull,' said the gentleman that had spoken before; I think 'twas Mr. Hawkins.

'I think not, sir,' said a calm voice from further down the table—Mr. Browning's. 'My lord hath had the matter reported to him exactly as I believe it befell; there is nothing over-stated.'

My Lord Massareene, that had a little reddened to hear his story doubted (though sure am I that Mr. Hawkins meant him no discourtesy), bent forward to see Mr. Browning the better; and I heard my Lady Hamilton ask

my husband, from where she sat on his right, who the gentleman was that spoke with so much authority, and how he came to know so well. With that Captain Hamilton spoke to Mr. Browning from his place, and the attention of every soul at the table was arrested.

'Mr. Browning,' said he, 'here's a lady that desires your better acquaintance: permit me to present you to Lady Hamilton, my aunt; perhaps you'll tell her and all of us how you come to speak of the matter with such assured knowledge. Not that I mean to cast the smallest doubt upon your right to do so.'

'Nor I neither, sir,' said Lady Hamilton, as they bowed to each other.

''Tis a matter easy enough to answer,' said Mr. Browning, with a smile. 'I am but just returned from England, where the tale is in everybody's mouth; I had it myself from an eye-witness.'

'My Lord Massareene,' said the old lady, 'perhaps you will do me the favour to repeat this wonderful tale for my benefit; for I protest I did not hear a word of it.'

Being thus questioned, my lord had no choice but to tell the tale again; it was that of King James's attempt to obtain the assent of Lord Lichfield's regiment to his assumption of arbitrary power in dispensing with the Test Act

and the penal statutes. He described, with much humour, the haranguing of them by the King in person, and how he enlarged to them his purpose of procuring toleration for all opinions; as though there was a man among them that knew not the meaning of that, or that knew not where his toleration for the Nonconformists would fly to, let him but once be surrounded by Catholics in office. Yet he stuck not to ask them to express by their acclamations their acceptance of this his design, or else to lay down their arms, telling them that such as did so should never lift them again in his service.

'Then,' continued my lord, 'instead of acclamation, there was heard a low murmuring all along the line, the officers joining in it as well as the men. There was a little hesitation that lasted scarce a moment, and then, beginning with the officer commanding, they one and all laid down their arms—at least,' said he, correcting himself, 'I believe there was one officer that retained his, and maybe a score of private soldiers, all told.'

'And what said his Majesty to that?' asked Lady Hamilton, putting the question that was on the lips of everyone that had not heard the story told the first time.

'Why, he was extremely displeasured,' said

Lord Massareene; 'at that none can marvel. He ordered the regiment back into quarters, I suppose under arrest, and told them that never while he lived would he honour them again by asking them for their opinion.'

He looked to Mr. Browning for confirmation, who bowed.

''Tis the exact story in every circumstance,' said he, 'as I heard it from one that was present, save only that he said nothing about arresting them; that, perhaps, had scarce been prudent, considering the temper they had shown He rated them soundly, as your lordship hath said, making use of the very words you repeated; but I believe he let them take up their arms before retiring to their quarters.'

'And so ends his Majesty's ill-judged attempt to repeal, by his single authority, a law the country is determined to uphold. 'Twill be a lesson to him another time, no doubt.'

James Hamilton, my lady's son and our cousin, spoke to this effect.

'Under your favour, sir,' said Mr. Skeffington, a little hotly, 'what earthly reason have we, at this time of day, to hope that King James will stoop to accept a lesson so salutary?'

There was a little stir here and there round the table at these bold words; a cautious man might have been warned and checked, but

Mr. Skeffington was not. He continued, taking no heed of it:

'The abolition of the Test Act hath been his chief aim since ever he came to the throne; sure, there's none of us but knows what to expect if he should ever carry it. Will he ever give it up, sir, do you think?' said he, appealing to Mr. Browning, four or five down the table on the other side from himself.

'I fear not, indeed, sir,' answered he, shaking his head.

'No, truly,' went on Mr. Skeffington; 'as soon entice a bloodhound to leave the trail as persuade the King to abandon a purpose he had given his mind to, especially if he think it a matter of religion.'

'That is sure a noble quality,' said I.

'Surely, madam,' said Sir Arthur Rawdon, 'were it but mixed with judgment, which it is not; or even with some sense of human error, which it is still less.'

'And that's very true, Sir Arthur,' said Mr. Skeffington. 'A man had need to be a very prophet, or a very Pope, to be as inflexible in the pursuit of his designs as King James. But you, sir, that are newly from England, tell us, if you will, how things seem to be going in that country.'

'But very poorly, sir, I fear,' answered Mr.

Browning. 'Since the birth of this young Prince of Wales there is everywhere a looking-up on the part of the Papists. While the Princess Mary was her father's heir, they were reasonably humble. His Majesty's favour and protection elated them to some degree, no doubt; but yet they knew it was no more than a season of prosperity; they were well enough assured that at their patron's death the sun would come round again to the other side of the hedge. But now——'

Here he stopped, looking at Captain Hamilton as if he feared to transgress the bounds of prudence if he should say more.

My husband is none of the most prudent of men with his tongue; but yet both he and all the rest of us were aware of the pains and penalties attached to high treason, and sure there was none of us that desired to stand within their danger. Therefore I suppose that, had he taken time to think, he had turned the conversation into another channel, as Mr. Browning by his manner plainly hinted would be safe. But a man's zeal doth run away with his wit full often; and so likewise doth the zeal of his company, if he share it. And the table was circled with zealous Protestants; even our chief guest himself, though up till that time reputed a staunch Royalist, was known

to all the world for one of the heads of that party in Ireland. It was he, when Captain Hamilton paused, that bade Mr. Browning continue.

'Well, sir; and now pray continue. What do they now expect?' said he.

'Faith, my lord, pretty much the same as we should expect in their place,' struck in Mr. Skeffington, who was the keenest partisan among us, save only, perhaps, Sir Arthur Rawdon. 'A continuation of the favour they're enjoying at present, at the very least, with very likely a charge at their old enemies, the Protestants, into the bargain. And not a doubt but they'll get it, if we manage not our affairs the better. The young Prince will be brought up a Papist, like his father—that's past praying against; he will be taught to think it the capstone of his glory if he should attain to reconcile the three kingdoms with Rome. And, after such a training, what can be looked for but that he should try to bring it about by fair means or foul?'

At this speech the last shreds of wisdom were cast to the winds; there was not a man at table, save one only, but waited for an opportunity to put in his word and speak his mind. My Lord Mountjoy leant forward in his place to address Mr. Browning. The words I missed, but it was plainly a question as to his

own private opinion on these matters. Thus appealed to, and by such a man, he had no choice but to say distinctly what he thought; and so he did.

'The last gentleman that spoke put the case exactly, as it seemed to me,' said he. 'No one hath the least doubt that the young Prince (if he be indeed the Prince, on which point many doubts are cast) will be brought up in the Romish faith, and to think it his plain duty to restore it as the established Church of the three kingdoms. What meant those pilgrimages to Loretto that all mouths were full of if not that? What reason could there be——?' Here again he paused, and looked at Captain Hamilton.

'We are all friends here, and of one mind, as I take it,' said he, replying to the look.

For the servants, of whose discretion one could not make certain, especially when so many of them were strangers, having come but for the day with their masters, had long since left the room.

'You go about, sir, more than the most of us,' continued my husband, 'and have more opportunity of learning what's thought on the other side of the Channel, and it will be a favour if you will be frank with us. We are all friends, I'm certain.'

And with that he looked up and down the

table. Everyone present, man and woman, assented in one fashion or another. Mr. Browning bowed, and then continued :

'If his Majesty have indeed committed this stupendous fraud—to pass off upon the country a child that is not his and the Queen's—what can be the motive but to procure himself a successor that will carry out all his plans? Mind you, I am far from affirming that he hath done this—God forbid he should be base enough!—but it is currently reported throughout England, for I missed no chance of hearing what was said. High and low, they are all in one tale, that the King is one that will stick at nothing to carry out his plans. Now, the mere fact that such a story is told and believed points no more plainly to their mistrust of him than to their fear of a Romish successor.'

'Why should they have so great a dread of that?' asked I, repenting me of my foolish question before it was well out of my mouth. For truly there was not one of us but knew well enough, and too well, what reason the country hath to mislike a Catholic on the throne.

'Why, madam?' said he, answering me. 'Because he will establish his father's acts, and continue his tyranny for a certainty. The Test Act once repealed, what is to hinder him

from filling all offices and all commands with Catholics, as he hath already filled the best of them? Once let the Papists get the upper hand of us, and we know what to look for. Hath anyone forgotten what happened in England in '85? That which came to pass in this very county in the year '41, when the grandfather of my lord at your right hand saved Derry from fire and the citizens from the swords of the Irish, hath still a plenty of living witnesses. Nay, I have myself seen things—and that none so long ago, neither—that are enough to make a man forswear his country, if the author of them is to be upheld.'

As he ended, half a dozen gentlemen spoke at once, the memories he recalled laying hold of them, so that there was a small tumult for a moment. Then Mr. Dacre of Quantock, our old and dear friend, was heard, the other voices occupying themselves in begging pardon of each other. Mr. Dacre hath good reason to remember the troubles of the forties, for as long ago as they happened; for his father's house on the Boyne was one of those that held out against the rebels, being well fortified and bravely manned; in the long-run, the house being tenable no longer, they made good their escape to Drogheda, where they took part in the famous defence of it against the Irish.

'Remember it!' he was saying when I could hear him. 'I can just fairly hear the yells of the wild Ultoghs at this moment, now that you've sent my mind back upon it.'

Here my Lord Mountjoy spoke, commanding at once the attention of all at table.

'Gentlemen,' said he, 'I am sure our host and hostess will agree with me that this conversation is trenching on matters that were best let alone. We are all friends and Protestants, 'tis true; but for all that 'tis unwise to cast aspersions at the powers that be. Besides, I hardly see myself that the Government can be held responsible for many acts that have caused discontent, they being done without its sanction.'

Had my lord contented himself with recommending caution, which came very well from his mouth, no doubt his advice had been followed. But this attempt to justify the Government could scarce be allowed to pass unchallenged. It was my Lord Massareene that replied to it, the only man at table that could have done so without presumption.

'I would have you to consider, my lord Viscount,' said he, 'whether it hath ever disowned any the worst of them. The actions it may, perhaps, on very rare occasions, though I protest I cannot call to mind a single instance; but the actors never, if they can be depended

on to do the King's will through thick and thin. What other title to favour had the Lord Chief Justice, to name but one example, than his utter contempt of the law when the King's will ran counter to it?'

'Ah!' said Sir Arthur Rawdon; 'and what other title to favour had lying Dick Talbot, our most worshipful Lord Deputy, than his disregard of all obligations, human and Divine, save when it might happen that to observe them led straight to royal favour?'

'Nay, under favour,' said Mr. Phillips, our neighbour at Newtown-Limavady, 'you're too hard on the Lord Deputy there, Sir Arthur. It's not so much his happiness to bask in the King's smile as King—not that I mean to say he holds it lightly, especially when it carries earldoms and such-like gauds along with it. But it's as an Irishman working for the supremacy of the Irishry that he's in his element; and it's because his views and the King's on that point jump together that they're so thick.'

'"Thick as thieves," you might say, and wrong neither of them,' said Mr. Skeffington. 'Faith, 'tis a thieving end they have in view, to take the land from them that have it, and give it to them that want it!'

'Ay, truly,' said Sir Arthur, 'and the power

from them that can use it, to give it to them that are as certain to abuse it as death is to come at the end of life.'

'Ay, and it's sure enough death is to come before the end of life,' said another, whereat there was a kind of sudden laugh that sounded more like a groan. 'Well, then, before the natural end of it, I mean, if the Irish get their way. Skeans and great hunting-knives for them that never hunt, and chain-bridles for them that are more used to a bit of straw-rope to their garrons' jaws! Wasn't it yourself, Mr. Phillips, that got hold of a cool fifty of them in the house of a parish priest the other day?'

'Ay,' said Mr. Dacre, not noticing the question; 'and every blackguard of an Ultogh with his brace of pistols—or, just as like, his piece—while every man of the Protestant gentry hath an order served upon him to deliver up his arms to Tyrconnel's nominee; and the nominee certain to be a Catholic, too, to give his fellows news that we're unarmed, if they desire to have at us. Ah, but it's possible they may catch a Tartar here and there, for all their carefulness.'

'You may make oath of that,' said Mr. Phillips, very dryly. 'I warrant the ancientness of the fashioning of the firearms of the Ulster

gentry hath not escaped notice up at the Castle in Dublin. We shall be having search-warrants presented next at our houses by these same Catholic nominees.'

'With very like a clause in them to inform the lieges in Ireland that it's a matter of high treason, with the pains and penalties thereto attached, should arms of any sort be found in their possession!' said Mr. Skeffington.

'Ah, like enough,' said someone near him, 'when it's too late to profit by the warning, were one so inclined. That is ever the course of the present Government. The question for us is, Are we going to endure such usage any longer? Is it not time that we should think of means for our own defence, when the Government that ought to defend us is bent on selling us, like sheep for the slaughter, to them that will think no more of killing a Protestant than of killing a sheep.'

'More!' said Mr. Dacre. 'Faith! it's easy to see you're over-young, sir, to remember the year '41. More! Why, sir, 'tis a great merit towards Heaven to kill a Protestant, be he man or maid—or infant in arms, for the matter of that. A man that dies in fight against us is as safe of heaven as any Mussulman killed in a war against misbelievers. Why, sir, they carry charms to absolve from the sin of perjury,

suppose they should swear quarter to us if we lay down our arms, and then kill us as soon as they get at us.'

'Sir, sir,' said my Lord Mountjoy, that had more than once endeavoured to interpose, but had never been able to make himself heard in the babel, 'sure you're saying more than you have warrant for. There's human nature in Catholics and Irishmen, I dare swear.'

'None but what the priest can send to sleep, my lord,' said Mr. Dacre bluntly; 'and never a word have I said but what I've seen on the back of their dirty little charm-papers, wrapped round their holy grains of St. Joan, and so forth. My good old friend, Nicolas Barnard, the Lord Bishop of Drogheda, had them by the dozen, taken from the corpses of the Irish soldiers. I've seen them many a time. Lord! the trash the poor benighted heathen would carry passes belief—St. James's girdles to ensure against death in battle; pictures of the Virgin Mary's shoe-sole to make them proof against cold steel. Sure, I grudge them none of these, were these all; but it's the doctrine that no faith need be kept with heretics that sticks in my throat. I can forgive them anything else but that.'

'But that,' said my lord, 'is a doctrine held

only by the Jesuits; you mustn't blame the Catholics in general for that.'

'Devil a bit of it, my lord! (that I should say such a word before the ladies!),' said Mr. Dacre. 'Or, at least, if so it be, there's more of them Jesuit than owns it. If it began among the Jesuits, the other Papists have taken to it like ducks to water. Think but of the King himself and his promises, and you'll be convinced; you'll very soon see what faith it's wise to put in promises that the priest can absolve from.'

'You'll argue a long time,' said Lord Mountjoy with some heat, 'before you'll convince me that his Majesty hath ever acted with deliberate perfidy, and I hope 'tis a task you won't attempt. Why, sir, times change; 'tis no more than justice to consider that. A man might even require to break a promise in the letter to keep it in the spirit.'

'Is it so that you deem of the King's breaches of faith?' asked Mr. Dacre dryly.

'Think but of him fairly,' said my lord; 'impute not evil to him without due cause. You were never wont to be ungenerous in your reading of men's motives, Mr. Dacre. Is it overmuch to ask the same charity for your Sovereign that you show to men your equals?'

My lord spoke with the dignity that became

him, and it told to advantage among the rest that were more heated. His sentiments sat well on him, too, his family having ever been supporters of the Stuarts, from whom they have derived much favour; as witness my lord's own peerage, a very recent instance. He spoke, therefore, only as he might have been expected to speak, for all his Protestant faith, and he had the advantages of coolness and deliberation besides; but he carried not a man at table with him, for all that. But Mr. Dacre, putting aside the heat of the moment, appeared to be gathering himself together, as it were, to reply deliberately to my lord's deliberate speech; and none could help seeing then how much deeper went the bitterness than the heat, it being ever the plainer the calmer he became.

'It is perfectly true, my lord Viscount,' said he, 'that his Majesty hath often told us roundly what to expect at his hands, and in the article of fulfilment he hath but rarely come short of his word; for, having promised to chastise us with whips, he hath many times chastised us with scorpions instead. Few will have the hardihood to deny that. But as a matter of deliberate perfidy, and that since your lordship hath challenged it, what think you of his conduct to the high dignitaries of the Church? What think you of his behaviour at Oxford in

the filling up of the vacant Principalship of Magdalen? Was Farmer a fitting person to hold it in John Hough's room, think you? We have all heard of what befell the fellows and graduates, all of them that demurred to his Majesty's illegal action in that instance, and that after promises given and repeated. And that is but one case out of many—*many*. Here in Derry itself is it not within our own knowledge how he appointed Dean Manby, a Romanist, to the temporalities of the deanery, a thing he hath no more right to do, my lord, than I have to authorize your butler to draw the rents of my Lord Massareene here? And is a breach of trust less perfidious than the breach of a promise made in words? These are small instances, perhaps; I can give you more, and greater, if you so desire. What say you, my Lord Mountjoy, to the means he is well known to have taken to gain a verdict against persons that were obnoxious to him, and that not once nor twenty times? He that makes no scruple to pack a jury, not to say a bench of judges, so to steal away an innocent life, is he not guilty of deliberate perfidy? May we not ask, rather, if there is any other act of treachery so black that he will stick at it? Ingratitude is perhaps scarce treachery, yet 'tis flour out of the same bag; and do but think of

the reward that some of his most loyal subjects and faithfullest servants have met with, they being Protestant; think but of his Grace of Ormonde, to take one instance out of scores. The old man died broken-hearted but a very few weeks before the University incurred the King's renewed displeasure—and that none so delicately expressed neither—by choosing his son for their Chancellor instead of my Lord Chief Justice Jeffries, of whose services the King hath a deeper sense than of Ormonde's and Ossory's. My Lord Viscount Mountjoy, to you and your family the King hath shown a little of that gratitude which all his faithful servants had a right to expect he would feel, even if he lacked the means to show it. Perhaps you are therefore bound to him, but I am not, nor are any of the rest of us here present. I have nothing to hope from his favour, and at my age 'tis scarce worth while to begin to hold him in terror. I look at his expressed intentions, I consider the means he hath chosen to carry them out, and I mistrust both him and his tools. A man that would try to filch from his own daughter one of the three kingdoms that are her just inheritance—as James undoubtedly tried to do this of Ireland before this precious Prince of Wales appeared—will do anything else that is underhand. I therefore

say deliberately that I acknowledge him no more as my Sovereign. I hear whisperings of an embassy to the Prince of Orange; should he come over to our relief, I for one will join him with such poor strength as I may muster. In any case, I renounce King James.'

This was going further than most of those at table dared; there went among them a long-drawn breath, as it were, of awe at his temerity, and hesitation whether to follow him or no. But the next moment Mr. Skeffington sprang up from his seat with his eyes on fire, as one might figure their passion; and as he did so, I saw from my place that Sir Arthur Rawdon, sitting next but one to Mr. Dacre, passed his hand in front of Mrs. Hawkins, that sat between them, and grasped the hand of Mr. Dacre.

'I am with you, sir!' said he quite audibly.

'And I, sir!' said Mr. Skeffington in a strange voice, that rang clear through a kind of huskiness, like one half choked with his own eagerness. 'Sir,' he went on, 'you have blood in your veins! Sir, you have a heart in your breast! You teach us younger men both how we ought to feel and how we ought to act. 'Tis no time for passive obedience any more, and the divine right of kings doth not extend to treachery and murder, as you truly say. A man might surrender his own neck, perhaps,

rather than to break a tie so dear as loyalty; but the lives of his wife and children, the lives of his sisters and his mother, crave defence at his hands. Sir, I for one will not sit me down cowardly at my fireside, there to be over-ridden by Irish scullogues, for fear of offending the powers that be. I will "gar my hand keep my head," as a good Scotch saying hath it—ay, and the heads of them that depend on me—so far as one man's power may compass their protection. And if there be anything public toward, with the purpose of keeping the right side uppermost, I am for it.'

'And so say I,' said Sir Arthur Rawdon. 'There are Protestants enough in Ulster to make good their defence against any force the Irishry can raise, so undisciplined as they be. It will be our own fault if we let them come to such a head that we cannot deal with them. I shall do my best to get this properly laid before all the gentlemen of influence in the province, and it will go hard but we make a league that shall be strong enough to set us beyond the need of defence from the Government.'

'My dear Sir Arthur! my dear Clotworthy!' said Captain Hamilton, with a laugh that was not very merry, but was rather meant to put a face of mere hot-headed talk upon what was,

in truth, a very serious matter, 'you will be pleased to remember that I hold his Majesty's commission, and not to say anything in my house that shall make it my duty to deliver you up to the military authorities at table.'

'Indeed, Mr. Hamilton,' said my Lord Mountjoy, 'I was just about to put you in mind of that same fact of your commission, thinking that your remembrance of it is something of the latest.'

'With your lordship's pardon,' said Captain Hamilton, 'I hold it no offence to discuss the King's actions, even for men that hold a commission in his name. We have that same good example of Lord Lichfield and his regiment to back me up in mine opinion, showing that the King himself cannot object to such discussion, seeing he doth all in his power to further it. But of course,' said he, with a very sly bow to Sir Arthur and Mr. Clotworthy Skeffington (both of them famous for an excessive zeal which doth run away with their wisdom) 'I can't be a party to absolute sedition under present circumstances.'

'That would almost seem to imply,' said Colonel Lundy, who, listening to every word, had yet taken no part at all in the conversation, save to profess himself a friend—'that would seem to imply that under other circum-

stances your conscience might perhaps absolve you.'

I have said already that Captain Hamilton is apt to be imprudent in his speech, though not to Sir Arthur's and Mr. Skeffington's degree, and he is, moreover, as unsuspicious as he is rash. There was that in Colonel Lundy's manner that warned me to put nothing in his power, and I would have given much for the chance of speaking but one single word to my husband before he replied. But though he looked at the two lords at my right and left before he spoke, I could not catch his eye for so much as a glance of warning.

'Well, Lundy,' said he, 'if our Colonel will permit us to speak exactly as we feel—and, as we're all friends, I scarce see why we should forbear it—I believe it will come to that sooner or later. I would fain believe the King's intention to be as he states it—to wit, of toleration to Nonconformists and Catholics alike. There might lurk a danger in that, no doubt; but yet, considering the King's own creed, a reasonable man could scarce refuse it to him. But I sadly fear that all the likelihood runs just the other way, and that as soon as the Catholics are strong enough to do without the Nonconformist alliance, the Nonconformist allies (supposing them to have become such, of which

Mr. Browning tells us there is no sign at present) will be treated with exactly the same mercy and toleration which King James showed them in Scotland when he was Duke of York. They themselves must look for nothing else, or else do you think they would refuse so great a benefit as toleration when 'tis set within their reach? That carries "Nay" on the face of it. Now, there's no one here but knows the King's character, how persistent he is. When he hath set his mind upon a purpose, 'tis like rending his prey from a tiger to make him give it up. I greatly fear that things which might serve as warnings to another man will but provoke him to greater obstinacy—such scenes, for instance. as that with the troops on Hounslow Heath, whereof we have even now heard, or such as London was full of from end to end as soon as the seven bishops were known to be acquitted. Then, you see, Lundy, and gentlemen all'—looking round upon his company—'the choice would fall to be made. Would we, because we hold his commission, uphold him in measures we heartily disapprove of against the Nonconformists that are our fellows in belief—measures, too, that he can only enforce at our swords' point? I would not, for as little of a Nonconformist as I be, nor, I think, would many of us.'

'And if he yielded not to the expostulations of his officers, nor to the desires of the bulk of his troops?' questioned Lundy. 'If he persisted still with any strength that might be left to him, what then?'

'Why, then,' said Captain Hamilton, 'it might come to be necessary to have our commissions new made out in the name of another Stuart that is known to be as much attached to the Reformed religion as her father is against it, and whose husband is the bulwark and hope of that religion throughout Europe — under Heaven, of course.'

'Well, Captain Hamilton, I must say that for a gentleman presently holding the King's commission, at all events, you go pretty far,' said Lord Mountjoy.

'You may trust me to do nothing against his authority while I do retain it,' replied my husband.

'Then, sir, you must not indicate to his liege subjects that, in certain contingencies highly dishonourable to his Majesty, you will think yourself justified in transferring your service to his daughter and her husband, the Stadtholder.'

'Should such contingencies arise,' said Colonel Lundy, 'how would your lordship think it your duty to behave, yourself?'

Lord! where do men keep their eyes, and of what use are they to them? For as Mr. Lundy put this question he looked up the table full at my lord Viscount, and thus I as well as he had a full and even look at him, and of all the treacherous, cruel, and false eyes that ever I saw in a human visage, Colonel Lundy's were the falsest, the cruellest, the most full of the advertisement of treachery. Had Eve looked the serpent in the eyes at the moment of her temptation—to be sure, they all but shut them in the daylight—she might have seen some such expression, and surely, being a woman, she had been warned. But my lord, sitting in his place, looked this other serpent straight in the face, and saw nothing there but pure honesty. Such is the penetration of a man when suspicion hath not put him on his mettle.

'Sir,' he said, 'if King James should show himself the vindictive and oppressive and deceitful wretch that these gentlemen do him the honour to suppose him, no man of heart and honour *could* support him. I, being, I hope, a man of honour and of some heart, should no doubt renounce his service like the rest. Perhaps I, too, might go the length of attaching myself to his opponents; but that,' said he, looking round upon us very proudly, 'will never be.'

Alas, my poor lord! he hath had good reason to change his mind since then.

But Colonel Lundy's face took on the expression that a fox's might display if by any chance he should entrap a lion that he had feared.

CHAPTER III.

HOW THE LORD VISCOUNT RID AWAY FROM CLONCALLY, LEAVING AN ANXIOUS HEART BEHIND HIM.

MISERABLE woman was I, as I remembered this our folly the next morning, before it was time to rise. Through and through the sieve of my memory I passed that which had been said, like one that endeavoured to bray it small enough to pass clean out of mind as a thing of no account. But ever the more I tossed it to and fro, the harder and the greater appeared the clots, the balls that we had made for ourselves to be struck thereby—and undone.

There was enough in the thought merely of the breach of manners we had been guilty of to hinder me of my rest. He that had honoured us by coming under our roof, that honoured us still by abiding there, all courtesy required that his pleasure should have been consulted before everything else, and certainly in the subjects we

chose to converse upon. Instead of which, he had been countered and well-nigh browbeaten at my table; his wishes disregarded for all so plain as he had been driven to speak them, and himself thwarted in his endeavour to turn us back into the paths of prudence. 'Twas little less than shameful rudeness, and I scarce knew with what face I might crave his pardon.

Then came my thoughts back again to the graver matter; sure and indeed it was grave enough, the best I could make of it. In the cool reflection of the morning silence I could not shut mine eyes to the fact that we had put our heads into a pretty noose, if any hand were there to draw it; my husband just as throughly as his friends, in the long-run, for all he had tried to hold them back at the first. And my mind misgave me but there was a hand to draw that noose—a hand that had no distaste to the office. The face of Lundy dwelt upon mine eyes; I saw it painted out upon the darkness; I saw it between me and the dawning light; I saw it as he put the question to Lord Mountjoy, 'In such a contingency, what would you do yourself?' At the thought of the look it wore, my heart died within me.

Who could say but my lord, though he had said so much to hold us back from the paths of peril, had ended by thrusting his own neck into

the same noose he feared for us? It was even but too likely, a thought whereat I could well have groaned aloud. Why, being wise for us, was he not wise for himself? Why did he not evade that wicked question?—which Lundy, instead of being answered, should have been rebuked for daring to put to his superior officer.

I protest that, unquiet as I was in mind about Captain Hamilton, I had well-nigh been content to bear that trouble could I but have made sure that, whatever peril threatened him, my lord was free of it. It seemed a thing weak to wickedness to have sat by and seen him enticed to his own betrayal, when a spoken word might have saved him. I asked myself what spell it was that had forced me to silence. Why could not I have traversed his reply, had it been but with some light jest? 'Twas a discourtesy I had been well content to answer. Alas! the thought of the thing I might have done was but an added folly, since it was the thing I had not done. To be wise behindhand is but to lock the door when the steed is stolen.

Another thing that kept stirring in my mind was that which Adam Murray said to me, when he came to take his leave. 'I would,' said he to me, drawing me apart—'I would we had been more guarded with our tongues before that sour-faced Puritan, Colonel Lundy.' 'If he be

but a sour-faced Puritan,' quoth I to him, 'we shall do well enough,' whereat he shook his head. 'I mislike him,' said he. 'I wish he had been bereft of his ears this day, or else we of our tongues!' To which I rejoined, being willing to pass the matter off lightly, so to lighten mine own fear, 'The tongue is an unruly evil, Adam; who can guide it? Not a weak woman, sit she never so firm in her chair at the head of the table!' But his fear weighed upon me like a fetter, and bound mine own upon me ten times more straitly, for he spoke but mine own thought, and he, as well as Mr. Browning, is a man that hath the leader's gift of making by instinctive apprehension a true estimate of men, their character and worth.

Well, it was useless, and worse, it was weak, to brood on these things, seeing I could not by brooding alter them a whit; and so I rose and dressed me, seeking to put trouble aside until such time as Captain Hamilton should awake. He slept as peaceful and as quiet as any child. Men are strange creatures, after all; danger is but a medicine to them. One should say that it doth but brace them to a new sense of life, as the chase affects a hound that is bred to it.

Returning to my chamber after the morning round of inspection that I ever use to make, unnecessary though it be, with Margery at the

heels of the maids before me, I found him awake and astir. The time I judged no bad one to open the matter, before he should come in company of my lord Viscount and his party that were all in the house. Sitting down, therefore, beside him, I gave a loose to all my misgivings and all my regrets, which I found him much disposed to set at naught.

'It's perfectly true, Mary,' said he to me, 'that we let our tongues run away with our wits, more or less; but, after all, what doth it matter? There was none among us but had his share in the pie, not one. And if it were not so, do ye think there was any man at table not fit to be trusted? Believe me, we're safe enough, for all our folly.'

'But my lord Viscount,' said I. 'We treated his scruples with scant respect. How often he desired we would quit the talk of politics; he might as well have spoken to the winds. He hath good enough reason to think us a set of unmannerly companions.'

'It's a certain fact that we should have paid more respect to his cautions,' said Captain Hamilton. 'They met with scant observance, as you say; but, after all, there were men at table as good as he, and better, that he could scarce look to control with a word, like a dominie his boys. My lord is too good a

comrade, Mary, not to take into account the effect that a pint of claret under his belt hath on a man's tongue, at such a time of public excitement, too, when matters of State mount into men's brains like wine.'

'It was for that very reason he besought us to keep clear of them,' said I.

'True enough, I believe,' said he; 'but for all that, you needn't forget that he took his own share in setting the ball a-rolling. In fact, I wouldn't take my oath that it wasn't himself that started it off at the first, asking Browning for his opinion of the temper of the nation over in England. A man that had done that can scarce expect to whistle back his company as the huntsman doth a pack of hounds that have mistook their quarry. My lord is too reasonable a man to bear malice for a fault of discretion he led the way to himself. And even if he did, which, I assure you, I think most unlikely, we are as safe in his hands as a babe in its mother's. My lord is staunch to a very fault—a man that might be trusted to keep his mouth shut on the rack rather than hurt his friends.'

'I think no less of him, indeed,' said I. 'But do you think we can put the same confidence in every one of the gentlemen that came hither in his company?'

'Now, which of them do you glance at there?

said Captain Hamilton, with a look that was anything but satisfied.

I shook in my shoes, I promise you, before I spoke; for there is nothing that so angers him as a suspicion that he thinks unfounded. But I judged it a time to use great plainness, so, braving his displeasure, I mentioned Colonel Lundy to him by name.

'Lundy?' said he, amazed, as it seemed. 'Lundy said she?—heard ever man the like? Now, Mary, I know well enough that this idea proceeds solely from your anxiety for your husband's safety, which it's most engaging of you to concern yourself about so tenderly; otherwise, do you know, I'd have been apt to tell you that your suspicion of my friend does but little honour either to yourself or me.'

'Is Colonel Lundy, then, your friend?' asked I, with a faltering voice; for it hath very rarely happened to me to be chidden by my husband, and it touches me very nearly at the heart.

'All the officers of a regiment are supposed to be friends to each other, according to their degree,' said he. 'Unless, to be sure, at such times as there may be an affair on foot, and after that's over they're better friends than ever. But I will tell you, my dear and sweet little wife, what is a very safe rule for any lady to go by: and that's to consider that any man her

husband brings into his house is to be treated—ay, and thought of—as his sworn friend and brother all the time he's there.'

Now, this speech of Captain Hamilton's showed me, as plain as if he had said it, that there was no friendship at all between the Colonel and himself; for this is not the way in which my husband, one of the warmest-hearted of men, speaks of such men as he cherishes a true regard for. Had anybody hinted evil against Adam Murray, for instance, that is my kinsman and not his, how far different had been his denial! But as for persisting in what I would fain have said, I dared not do it, being clean daunted already by the thought of his anger.

And yet it was a thing equally beyond me to let him ride away with that man—a traitor, as I would have wagered my right hand—without another attempt to put him on his guard. That which I had said already had done nothing at all, save to increase the danger, as I was abundantly aware. For well I knew my husband, and his knight-errantry of generosity. Knowing the man to be suspected—and, as he thought, unjustly—by one so near himself as his own wife, it was great odds but he went out of his way to repose confidence in him, even to the imperilling of his own safety, so to atone to

him, as it were, for the insult of my distrust, whereof he knew nothing.

While I pondered how to lay the matter before him once more, and that without seeming to question his right to forbid the subject, Margery brought little Roland to the door of the chamber—three years old and a month, almost to a day, and, though I say it myself, as forward and fine a child of his age as one could wish to see. His father takes much pleasure in seeing him trotting about his knees, and it was our custom, whenever Captain Hamilton was at home, to bring Roland into the room 'to help dada to be d'essed,' as he said. As I was playing with the little fellow, tossing him up and down, a thought came into my head: I might say that to the child in play which I wished the father to hear in earnest. So, fearing like any coward lest my heart should fail me if I gave it time, I even plunged forthwith into the midst of the stream.

'Baby boy,' I said, 'dada's going to ride back to Derry this very day.'

'Dat's a pity!' said Roland.

'Tell him to take care of himself, for mother's sake and yours, baby boy,' I went on.

'Dada,' said the child, 'mind 'oo takes care and not tumble down, cos muddy and Roy 'd ky.'

'Muddy and Roy would cry, would they?' said his father, smiling.

'Yes, they would,' said I. 'If anything happened to hurt father, it would break their hearts!'

'B'ake 'ems hearts,' repeated Roland very seriously, putting his hand on his stomach, whereat his father began to laugh.

'And oh, tell him, little Roland,' I went on, taking hold of my courage with both hands, as the saying is—'tell him that if he were to say anything to any bad man that the bad man might repeat, and so bring evil upon him—oh, Roland darling, whatever should we do? we'd never smile again.'

This was far too long a speech for the dear little child to carry, or even to understand; but one thing he plainly gathered—that some evil was about to befall his adored 'dada.' He toddled up to him with the most pitiful face imaginable.

'Nebby, nebby 'mile again!' said he, holding up his two little hands and bursting into tears.

Captain Hamilton could not help catching him up to kiss and comfort him. He spoke to me, making a vain endeavour to be stern:

'I could well be angry with you, Mary, for this persistent folly,' said he, 'if I did not see you had it so deeply at heart. Will it content you, now, if I promise to be careful?'

'Careful to the verge of cowardice,' said I, trying to smile, but with tears in my eyes and in my voice.

'What, Mary — tears? *You!*' said my husband, amazed; for, indeed, 'tis very seldom that I use to weep. 'Oh, the little silly! Oh, the trick to beguile a man of his wrath! Well, then, careful to the verge of cowardice,' says he in a different voice, 'if that's what you desire in your husband.'

'Only in speech,' said I.

So then he comforted me, as well as the child; and presently I went down stairs with a lighter heart than I had carried up them. The past could not be undone, that was sure enough; but yet it was something to be assured for the future, and I was thankful accordingly.

When my Lord Mountjoy made his appearance, I made him at once, and in plain language, the apology that was his due. He, on his part, made as though there had been naught amiss; never woman had a guest more amiable or one more desirous to discharge her of all blame that she knew herself to have merited. But for all his complacency to me, there was that in his face when he regarded Captain Hamilton that I had given the world to have been able to fathom.

Captain Hamilton thought it a proper civility on his part to set his guests on their way to Dublin; indeed, it is a roundabout road to that city to take Cloncally on the way. Neither can it be called a stage on the journey, being but barely four miles from the Diamond of Derry; but 'tis no bad starting-place, either, for the river is easy enough to cross at Claudy Ford if the ferry-boat should not be running at Carrigans. My lord set forth about eleven of the clock, bidding me good-bye with many civil expressions of gratitude and pleasure at his entertainment, which sank me but the lower in my remorse for my remissness. Had there been another party to supper at Cloncally that day, I warrant they had met with a sterner rule from the table-head.

They left Cloncally, riding in two ranks of three, as they had come, my lord and Colonel Lundy riding in front with Captain Hamilton, and the other three gentlemen behind. Their servants had left an hour before, and were to await them at Strabane with their mails. They rode for a little time, as Captain Hamilton took occasion to tell me in the evening, in the same order as they left the house in, Colonel Lundy having most of the talk to himself, for my lord was something moody and inclined to muse. After awhile he roused himself, and very

courteously desired Colonel Lundy of his goodness to ride behind with the other gentlemen, signifying his wish to have some private talk with Captain Hamilton. I could well have danced with pleasure at hearing that, for I took it to mean that my lord himself had some suspicion of his second in command; wherein I was in error. But it must have displeased Lundy mightily, the born spy that he was, to ride behind and see them talking, and yet to hear no word of what they said.

Lord Mountjoy being thus left private with Captain Hamilton, began to speak to him of the conversation of the night before, at which my husband seized his opportunity, and expressed his regret that we and our guests had so far forgotten the consideration due to his known loyalty. My lord most graciously put that aside, as he had done to me, declaring almost in Captain Hamilton's own words of the morning that in such times, when public feeling ran so high, 'twas impossible to make men observe such restraints.

'But you,' said he, 'should have remembered that you stood in a different position from the most of them; you held King James's commission, which the other offenders did not.'

This was very true, and could not be denied; and so Captain Hamilton expressed himself,

though saying that some of those that spoke the plainest have held it very lately. At that they glanced into the debatable ground again, my lord endeavouring to prove, what I think he must have found something of the stiffest, that the King's meaning had been honest from the first, but partly thwarted by those that stood near the throne, and partly misunderstood by them that thought themselves threatened. Captain Hamilton, with all possible deference, endeavoured to justify his misgivings. At last my lord, in the friendliest manner that was possible under the circumstances, brought up my husband's unhappy speech concerning the possibility that he might be driven to exchange King James's service for that of the Prince of Orange. That, he said (and sure it was the case), was going further than any man in his situation had a right to do. His duty made it impossible to overlook it in one of his officers. He begged Mr. Hamilton to give him a positive assurance that he had spoken without reflection, carried away by the heat of the moment; or else he said he had no choice, save to desire him to resign his commission.

Could a man in my lord's situation be fairer or more forbearing? Had it been the case of a brother he was dealing with, could he have shown a friendlier desire to put safety within

his reach? It was exactly true that what Captain Hamilton had said amiss had been let slip in an unguarded moment, utterly without consideration; so much he might have sworn, and done no violence to his conscience. But what must he do now—led, I must suppose, by some cross devil of independence—but to fall to justifying himself? Half the officers in the service, he told my lord, and far more than half the men, held the very same mind as he did. My lord himself had avowed sentiments that were but little short of his own. This was what he saw fit to say to his Colonel commanding, who had just *gone out of his way*, as they say, to open to him a door of retraction.

My lord Viscount at this grew perceptibly more haughty; so much might well have been foretold. He rebuked him in terms that were, perhaps, a thought too severe, considering the terms of friendship upon which they stood, going even so far as to say it was his duty to put Mr. Hamilton under arrest for a rebel, at which Mr. Hamilton bowed very low, and begged to know to which of the officers my lord chose he should surrender his sword.

Lord Mountjoy at this grew as white as the dead, and broke out with some expression of his personal regard for Mr. Hamilton that fairly took the heart from him for any further

dispute. He begged his Colonel's pardon for all that he had said that had given him pain.

'But, sir,' said he, 'I should deal very uncandidly with you if I failed to tell you frankly at this moment, since things have gone so far, that I have had scruples for a long time about retaining that commission which you have just been talking of taking away from me. Perhaps, considering all that hath come and gone since we rid out of Derry yesterday, it will be best, after all, that your lordship should consider that I give it up to you this present minute; 'twill save you the trouble of depriving me of it if any word of our unhappy conversation should leak out.'

'Have sense, sir,' says Lord Mountjoy—'sense and foresight. Consider but how it will look if any word of your rashness doth leak out, that you gave up the King's service the next day. Will it not have all the appearance of premeditated treason? I fear 'tis my strict duty to deprive you without giving you the option to resign; but, man alive! don't I know you? I can't offer you such a dishonour, nor thrust you into such a risk. Why, then, should you insist upon doing so ill an office to yourself?'

Upon this they fell to arguing the point, whether it were wiser for Mr. Hamilton to resign his commission forthwith—indeed, he

offered to deliver the paper itself into the hands of Colonel Lundy the next day, upon his return to Derry—or that he should retain it until such time as my lord himself returned from Dublin, when all risk of scath to them that had taken part in the seditious talk at our table might be supposed to have passed over. Lord Mountjoy was very strong for this latter course. Captain Hamilton, having once made up his mind to broach the subject of his resignation, was desirous (as his manner is) to have the matter over and done with as speedily as might be. For once, as the event proved, his impatience had been the better policy. The haste he would have used had brought, no doubt, its own dangers ; but the delay which my lord recommended was but a stumbling course—a hesitation that had well-nigh proved fatal to both him and Mr. Hamilton. But he being so anxious that Captain Hamilton should submit to be guided, and there being some reparation due to him, as well as some deference, my husband ended by accepting his advice, agreeing to continue in command of his company until my lord's return from Dublin, and of his own accord promising to keep clear of politics in the meantime.

My lord, upon his side, undertook to receive Captain Hamilton's commission immediately upon his return, if he were still minded to

surrender it, and promised to say nothing to my Lord Deputy which should in any way prejudice my husband, should he by that time have changed his mind, and be desirous to continue in the service.

'Though sure,' said he to me, as he finished his account of the conversation, 'there was no need for him to say a word about that. If I trusted him not so far, there's no power in the world should make me delay my resignation a single day.'

As for me, with all the faith in the world in my lord's kind intention, it was as though a leaden weight had been laid upon my heart. Never a word had my husband said to me of his intention to resign; not even that morning, when it had been a cordial to me. At the first word of it, I felt it was the one way out of the false position he had put himself into, for, once clear of the King's service, he would be no worse situate than Sir Arthur Rawdon or Mr. Skeffington. It was on my very lips to ask him why he had permitted himself to be overruled. But seeing that it was too late then to mend his error, I was even fain to hold my tongue, save that I besought him once more, as he left me to get to horse in the evening, to be cautious, careful to folly even, prudent to cowardice, as he had said in the morning. At

my earnestness he fell to laughing, calling me all the names of a coward in a kind of loving blame, and asking me if I thought he was like to be entrapped into some act of overt rebellion in the next fortnight? And so he rid away to Derry through the dusk, leaving a heavy heart and an anxious behind him.

I strove to put away my fears, and to look at what had passed as he did; but in spite of myself I was tormented by an instinctive foreboding of mischance, such as we women have a prescriptive right to. Men laugh at us for them; but sure 'tis themselves they ought to laugh at sometimes for being too uplifted to profit by them. They are stronger than we, and no doubt wiser, as they say; but yet it were well for them if they should submit to be warned now and then by those very forebodings that they laugh at.

As I turned to go back into the house, I caught sight of a spider's web on one of the bushes, in one corner whereof there was a fly struggling helplessly for its freedom. The spider, gorged, I suppose, left it to struggle at its will, secure that it could not break loose and escape. It was even but too faithful an image, to my mind, of Captain Hamilton's case—enmeshed between his written bond and his spoken promise, and helpless to break forth to freedom;

nay, hindered by his given word from so much as a single effort for it.

Moved by I scarce know what folly, I put my finger delicately beneath the fly and carefully set it free. It prinked itself for awhile where I placed it, and then flew away into the dusk. If it escaped the other spiders' webs that were spread for wandering flies, little doubt but the cold put a speedy end to its poor life.

'But yet,' said I to myself, 'it hath a chance to live to its natural term.'

Then, laughing at mine own foolishness, I went into the house, striving to forget my dread in the thousand nothings that make up a woman's life.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEREIN TWO IRISH BLACKGUARDS, A GREAT AND A SMALL, MAKE THEIR APPEARANCE AT CLONCALLY.

I SCARCE looked to see my husband again till after Lord Mountjoy's return from Dublin, except, perhaps, for an hour upon some day when he had time to ride out to Cloncally and back again to Derry. It was therefore with the keenest pleasure that I got word, on the Saturday morning of the next week after my lord's departure, that he had his leave for the Sunday, and might be expected that night to pass the four-and-twenty hours in his own house. The one compensation for our many partings was our many meetings. Sure, there is no joy on earth like the first sight of a beloved face after a time of separation. This time, following quicker upon his last visit than I had any right to hope, his coming had a special grace.

To show a due sense of it, as well as to gain a few minutes of his company, I set forth about three of the clock in the afternoon to meet him, taking Roland in my hand. The day was lowering and gusty, drawing down, as I thought, to rain ; and when we had passed out of the shelter of the garden wall, so raw a wind met us full in the face, blowing from the north-west across the river, that I thought it not wise to face it with the child. I paused for a minute or two on the bridge across the little brawling stream that runs down through the wilderness into the Foyle, looking beneath my lifted hand towards the Waterside of Derry, if so I might descry him on the road. But there was no sign of him, and I was turning away, with my eyes still upon the distance, when Roland pulled at my skirt.

'Boy!' said he to me. 'Boy under ze tree.'

His observation is extraordinary quick for a child of his age. I looked where he pointed, and there truly, under one of the ragged bushes that skirts the course of the brook, lay what might well have passed for a heap of rags. I had never marked it, save for Roland ; but it was no weather to leave a human being sleeping out of doors. Whether he had lain down from sickness or merely from laziness, 'twas clearly my duty to rouse him up. I went towards him,

and presently could make out that he was a lad of perhaps twelve years. Roland, who seemed mightily taken with him, could make out something more.

'Boy dot round spots on him's face,' said he.

This was true, or, rather, it had been truer had he said round holes; for the face of the lad was most pitifully scarred with the small-pox, seeing which, I bade Roland keep the other side of the road while I roused him up. 'Tis an illness I have little mind to catch. So I kept my hands by my sides, and merely spoke to the sleeper. It was a hard and a cold couch he had chosen, but for all that his slumbers were as deep as if he had lain on down. I called to him half a dozen times before he stirred and sat up. Then I asked him how he could be rash enough to go to sleep out of doors in such a wind.

'Sure, 'tis safe enough,' replied the small rascal, rubbing a pair of very little bright-blue eyes, 'whin the good angels is goin' about.'

'The good angels won't prevent you from taking a chill if you do such foolish things,' said I.

'Och! yes,' said he, with a grin that was something of the widest, yet pleasant somehow in spite of its dimensions. 'Och! yes; wan of them comes and wakens you up whin the cold's beginnin' to catch on to ye.'

'What, you monkey!' said I, 'have you learnt so soon to flatter?'

'Not a bit, me lady,' said he with a comical earnestness. 'Av ye haven't come from hivin, sure it's because ye carry it about wid ye whereiver ye go.'

'Get up this minute,' said I, for the lad was still seated on the damp earth; 'get up, and tell me how long it is since you had the small-pox.'

''Twas in the cold weather,' said he; 'in the spring-time, I mean. I was up and about by the time the days were warm and long.'

Hearing that, I was no longer afraid to touch him.

'Get up at once from the ground,' said I, taking his hand, 'and tell me how you came to go to sleep in such a place.'

'Och! my lady,' said he, and very frail and little he appeared when at last he stood on his feet, though older, I thought, than I had at first supposed—'och! 'tis pretty aisy tired I am ivver since the faver, an' it was weary, weary I was when my father left me to go up to the house, so I sat down where he left me, under the tree; an' it's the truth I'm tellin' ye, an' not a bit of a lie, I never knew I was aslape till you wakened me up. Sure, my lady, I wouldn't desave you!' said he very earnestly,

fancying, no doubt, that I looked upon his falling asleep on my premises as a kind of blameworthy trespass.

'Is it to Cloncally your father has gone?' I asked him.

''Tis to the great house, any way,' said he. ''Tis to see the Captain he came.'

'Captain Hamilton?' said I.

'Sure, it's meself that doesn't know his name,' said the lad; 'but the jantleman that lives in there,' pointing to Cloncally.

'Then, my boy,' said I, taking Roland by the hand, 'you had better walk up to the great house with us. You will find your father there, no doubt; and, indeed, you'll rest more safely beside the kitchen-fire than under a blackthorn bush in weather like this;' for even as I spoke to him I saw the poor lad shiver in the damp wind.

We set forth, therefore, without further delay. I could well have laughed at the fixedness of Roland's eyes, which he kept as firmly set upon the lad as one that hath been brought under a spell. In truth, he scarce endured to hold my hand, because when he did so I came between him and the object of his wonder.

'Werry funny boy,' said he in a tone of reverent satisfaction.

To me he seemed, on the contrary, a very

miserable one. He was either footsore or so extremely weary that he could scarce set one foot before the other. 'Tis a thing I never could abide, to see a child in pain, and so I offered him my hand that was free; it was, at least, a little help.

'Werry funny boy,' repeated Roland, peeping round my skirts; and as he said the word, there rose with a startling suddenness from the side of the road that hath no fence a man that was anything but 'funny,' being, indeed, the most evil-looking ruffian that ever I saw so near. I had some ado to avoid letting him see how little I liked the situation, for, indeed, my heart fluttered and beat to my very great discomfort.

'My father,' said the little lad beside me by way of explanation.

The man stopped us in a manner that was short to very insolence, much different from the fawning way these low Irishmen commonly use to the Englishry. He seemed a very typical specimen of the sort, with the low, receding brow, short nose, showing too much of the nostril, small cunning eyes, long cheeks and chin, wide, cruel mouth, and for clothing such rags, so foul and tattered, as my people had scarce endured to see upon a scarecrow. Here was a pretty figure to frighten a lady. The

boy, though poor and thinly clad, seemed yet a creature of another race than his father's.

'When will the Captain be at home?' asked the man, without the least courtesy of 'av ye plaze' or 'by your lave,' and even without removing his hat, which latter omission my son, my little champion, was quick to notice and rebuke.

'Off 'oo hat, bad man!' shouted he, with a stamp of his little foot, and in a voice of so much authority that I could scarce forbear to smile, considering the size of him that assumed it.

With that smile came my courage pricking back into my heart, like the blood into the skin when one hath been nigh to fainting.

'The child is right,' said I very coolly. 'No man that hath any respect for himself forgets to uncover when he speaks to a lady.'

He took off his hat mighty awkwardly, and with the act of deference it was evident that his insolence began to ebb. With that, my courage rising the higher as his declined, I began to question him about the business that brought him to Cloncally, concerning which he was far from communicative; but learning that he had walked five or six miles to see Captain Hamilton, I thought it a pity that he should be baulked of it for the matter of half an hour's waiting. I therefore directed him to give his

son his arm and follow me to the house, both of which he did, though with something the air of one that was astonished at himself. For my own part, I, too, was something astonished at myself, for though we were in mine own premises, it was hardly likely that any of my people should be within call should I have need of them. And certes, in spite of the face I contrived to put upon my cowardice, the courage in my heart was of the thinnest. I had much ado to forbear imagining a bare skean in the hand of the Ultogh behind me, and once or twice it seemed as though I had a marvellous clear idea of what 'twere like to feel one in the back.

But presently, for all my fears, we came safe and sound to the house-door, where, having summoned Cargill, I gave him charge to see my two Irishmen safe bestowed in the kitchen and something given them to eat. At this, not a little to my chagrin, a new difficulty arose; for Roland refused to be parted from the 'boy,' and clamoured to be permitted to take him to his nursery. I a little demurred to it at the first, but Roland begged so earnestly that, being assured that more than six months had passed since the other had been sick of the 'faver,' as they called it, I gave my consent. The lad's face spoke for him powerfully, being

both good-natured and intelligent. His clothes, though poor and worn to a degree, were cleaner than his father's, and showed some sign of a mending hand, whereat I much wondered till I heard from him that his mother was of the Englishry, at which, sure, I wondered more than ever how such an one could have so lowered herself as to become the wife of a man like him before me. I was myself something taken with the lad, and under Margery's sharp eyes sure he could do no harm to Roland ; so, as I say, I consented to allow him to go to the nursery and not to the kitchen.

The father, one might well have supposed, would be pleased with the notice taken of his son. Perhaps he was ; at any rate, his evil scowl was transformed into a kind of grin, but the grin was so much more evil than the scowl, being less germane to the face, that I could endure his neighbourhood no longer, and so hurried away after the children.

Willing to make some explanation to Margery of the coming of so strange a guest, I followed them into the nursery, to find that her good heart needed none, beyond the evident weariness of the lad. She had seated him already in an elbow-chair, where truly he seemed much at his ease. He had just told her his name, which was one no less Irish than Gorman O'Cahan ;

he seemed, indeed, to have all the will to tell us whatever we chose to ask him of himself. I was pleased with his openness; I was pleased with his civil manners, marvelling, indeed, no little at the same until he told us his mother was of the English, when the wonder ceased. The poor lad, though he had a misfortune in his father, had no doubt a heaven's blessing in his mother; we could discern it more and more evidently in every word he spoke. A towardly lad he was, and one that his mother had no need to blush for, and in his apprehension, as I thought, quick beyond the common.

Roland broke in upon the questioning, coming suddenly out of his closet of toys, where he had been searching by himself, with a jack-in-the-box of the most extreme ugliness in his hand. He caused it to play up and down in its box with much satisfaction to himself.

'Zis is 'oo,' said he to the little Irishman. 'Werry like '*oo !*'

'Sure, 'tis flattherin' me the little jantleman is!' said Gorman, with the completest enjoyment of the jest, and with a glance so comical that Margery and I broke out into a fit of laughter, for, indeed, the puppet was so hideous that to describe Roland's saying as 'flattery' was no bad jest, and I felt my heart warm still more to the lad thereat. One of an ill nature,

I thought, had certainly taken it amiss to be compared to such a monster.

I left the nursery with the children's laughter ringing in mine ears; sure, there is no sound like it for music in the world. At the door of mine own chamber I found Cargill, who had been there to seek me; it was to tell me that the Irishman desired speech of me.

'And what about,' said he, 'I'm sure I don't know, unless 'tis to complain of his supper. Indeed, madam, he's just the worst-looking blackguard that ever I clapped eyes on, and that's a pretty long word, too,' says he, 'when a man has lived nigh upon twenty years in Ireland.'

For Cargill was born and brought up in England, and so hath even a greater contempt for the Irishry than we of the colony, who know that there be good and bad among them. But this O'Cahan was of the worse sort—his looks proclaimed it—and as he stood before me again in the hall, I wondered more than ever what spell he had used to induce a woman of the Englishry to become his wife. From my heart I pitied her, the mismated creature, for that she was one of the better sort the bringing up of her son was sufficient proof.

That which the man desired to say to me was no complaint, but a question—to wit, if

I certainly looked for Captain Hamilton's coming that night? His business, he said, was pressing, and scarce would brook the delay he had already been led into; if the Captain's coming was doubtful, he would walk on to Derry, where he would be certain to find either him or some other of the officers of the garrison. This showed me in a moment that it was regimental business he was after, but even as he said it, there came to our ears the sound of my husband's voice speaking to the grooms that were in waiting. Both I and the Irishman went toward the door, and as we reached it Captain Hamilton opened it from without and entered.

'Ah, sweetheart!' quoth he, seeing me; 'sure, 'tis a cure for sore eyes, and sore heart as well, to find you expecting a man at the very door.' And so he would have taken me in his arms, but suddenly he saw the Irishman standing at his elbow. 'Who's this?' he asked, in the sharp, imperious way he hath with him. 'Tis a trick most officers acquire sooner or later.

'Well,' said I, ''tis a man that hath been waiting here for an hour or more to see you, but what his business is I don't know.'

Captain Hamilton looked at the man from head to foot in a way that seemed little friendly.

'What, *another* of them?' said he, in a tone so full of anger and vexation that I gazed at him. 'Hark ye, my man! are you an Irishman of Ulster, desirous to enlist in my company of Lord Mountjoy's regiment of foot? and have you a letter to me from his Reverence Dean Manby that is to tell me all about the matter?'

'Your honour's a witch of a guesser!' said the man, in some surprise.

'I'm right, then? Well, you can go back to the Dean, and tell him from me—— Or, stay; I'd better read the letter. There may be some reason in this one, or something in the nature of an apology—who knows?' said he bitterly.

But having read the letter, 'twas plain that he found nothing of the sort in it, for he spoke with much severity to the man.

'Go back to Dean Manby,' said he, 'and tell him—with my compliments, mind that!—that I've no vacancies in my company, and that I've no mind to make them as he desires — by cashiering loyal Protestant men. I'd write you a note, my man, but it's quite unnecessary; he will hold you blameless, for he hath had the same message from me five times in the last two days, in writing and by word of mouth.'

The man muttered something that I failed to

catch, it being in the Irish tongue, which I do not understand. But Captain Hamilton speaks it a little, being country-bred, and he caught this that the man said, and answered it in the English.

'Make us pay for our pride, did ye say? And when, may I ask, and how?' said he.

Finding himself understood, which he had not looked for, the Irishman began to try to explain away what he had said. This was, as I knew, the sure way to anger Captain Hamilton to the point of actual violence; he doth so hate and contemn cringing and deceitfulness. I thought it well to interpose, therefore, and did so, speaking to him of his son, and desiring to know if he were going straight home, to which he answered: 'No, but into Derry, to have speech of the Dean.' At that I asked him to leave the lad at Cloncally, promising to send him home early the next day, for, indeed, he was too frail and weary to set out on such a toilsome journey at so late an hour.

''Tis a troublesome wake crater he is,' said the man, 'ivver since he had the faver.'

He looked so ill-conditioned as he spoke, and even when he fell to expressing his gratitude for the offer, that I was thankful for the poor boy's sake to have leave to keep him. Had I known what was before us, truly I had been

thankful for mine own, and for the sake of all and everyone that I held dear; for the friendships done by Gorman O'Cahan to me and mine—ay, and to the city, and to the kingdom—since that day have out-weighed that poor bounty of a night's lodging by many and many a thousandfold.

As the man turned from the door, a groom that stood thereby, waiting no doubt his master's orders, was heard to wish 'bad luck to him for a scoundrelly rap.'

'And what's the use of that, now?' said Captain Hamilton. 'Is it to anger the man you would like?'

'Did you hear what he said, sir?' asked the groom, saluting, but with a strange flash in his eyes.

'No, what was it?' said his master.

'He said, sir—'twas in the Irish, and under his breath, but I caught it—"They'll all be beneath our feet before long, and then we'll *grind them*;" and sure, he ground his heel on the doorstep as if we'd been beneath it then!'

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH THE SITUATION IS REGARDED FROM TWO SEVERAL POINTS OF VIEW.

It was perfectly evident that Mr. Hamilton was extremely discomposed; for without taking the least notice of the merry laughter that was ringing through the house from the nursery, he walked straight past the door of it into his own room.

'Gad!' said he, turning to me, 'I'd give something to be at the bottom of this insolence on the part of the Irish.'

'That man's insolence was sure uncommon,' said I. 'I never saw the like before.'

'It's little I'd care for him, and all the rest of his equals,' said Mr. Hamilton. 'If they got beyond bounds, 'twould mean no more than treating them to a good beating, to bring them back to their senses; there's no great difficulty in that, that ever I could hear! But the thing I mistrust is the backing they must know of; never a man of the Irishry would dare behave

like that in the house of an English gentleman unless he were sure of his backing! To be sure, there's no secret made of it that it's at Tyrconnel's orders they're moving heaven and earth to bring them into the army. But that's a trifle in comparison with such assurance as this; it points to nothing less than an understanding between themselves—for as wretched scullogues as they are—and people in the highest quarters!'

'But that's no news!' said I. 'We have known for many a day that my Lord Deputy and all his friends would like nothing better than to turn the world about, as I might turn a sand-glass. We have the Irish under our hand at present, but it's pleased the Lords of the Pale would be to set their feet on our neck, ah! and no less pleased to see their countrymen, down to the lowest, setting their feet there too. But, dear!' said I, bent on turning my husband's thoughts to the hopeful side, 'the side that hath the upper hand can surely keep it; and what's to fear?'

'What would be to fear, my wife,' said he, 'if one were to undermine the foundations of his ramparts?'

'Why, to be sure they would overset,' said I. 'But there's never a man in the whole world so great a fool.'

'Is there not, indeed?' said he, laughing. But the laugh had so little mirth that it daunted me more than his dismay. 'That's good hearing, now! for by what I've seen myself I'd have said it was the very folly that half the Englishry of the province are bent on bringing to pass.'

'What do you mean?' said I.

'Well, Tyrconnel's mind toward us is well enough known, as you said but one minute ago. A Papist of the Papists is Tyrconnel, an Irishman of the Irish; he owes us no love by his own showing, and 'tis a fact that he bears us none. It would be the best day of his life if he could contrive to turn the world about, as you expressed it, set his countrymen where we stand, and lower us out of our place into theirs, or worse than that. And his master is of one mind with him, not a whit more friendly. He'd be as pleased as Tyrconnel to see the back of the last Protestant in Ireland.'

'Sure enough!' said I. 'The thing is matter of notoriety. But sure, the very openness of their hatred robs it of its danger; forewarned is forearmed, all the world over.'

'Wouldn't you say so?' said he. 'Would you ever think that men that knew so well what to look for, should the wrong side come uppermost again, would listen for a moment to

his blandishments? 'Tis enough to make a man believe in witchcraft, but I tell you the truth, Mary; he hath set himself to disarm the Protestants, and they're willing, to all appearance, to set their own hand to the deed. Ah, would you think that, knowing what they know of the Lord Deputy, they'd let him wheedle their weapons out of their hands?'

'"Tis clear if they do,' said I, 'that the world is altered since Solomon writ his Proverbs. "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird."'

'So he said, indeed,' said Captain Hamilton. 'But the wisest of men would see reason to change his mind were he going about this day in the Province of Ulster, or else there be men more foolish than the fowls. The blindness they show passes understanding.

'But how?' I asked of him, a little frightened in spite of myself.

'Well, this that you've seen to-day is a part of it,' said he. 'You know the changes that have been made of late in the Corporation of Derry, of course?'

'Cormack O'Neill is made the Mayor,' said I. 'I know that.'

'Yes, he is,' replied Captain Hamilton; 'he is. And what right hath he to it, I'd like to know, except his name, which is Irish, and his

leanings, which are all Tyrconnel's way? But he's no more than an Irish mayor set up to guide a tribe of Irish councillors; for there's not a man left that's not more Irish than English, and that, mark you, could never have been brought about by the Government except with the town's consent.'

'Any man that is not foolish,' said I, 'can see well enough what that tends to bring about.'

'One would say so, at least,' said he; 'but yet he hath no more to do than to begin his piping, and they're all dancing presently to the tune he likes. And having succeeded in that move—I dare say far beyond his hopes—here comes the next. The army must be cleared of Protestants and filled with Papists; and once that's accomplished, the end's at hand. When the wolves have the care of the sheep, the rending and ravening's not far off, take my word for it.'

'Well, and if they should submit to have such watch-dogs foisted on them,' said I, 'they'd have none to blame but themselves. But the Lord Deputy hath gone too far at last, I should fancy. He hath begun a measure now that no man will dance to, let him charm as wisely as he may.'

'I would I could think so,' said Captain

Hamilton; 'but the news of every morning gives the lie to such a hope. The drafting goes on apace, I can tell you. The Rapparees have been sent to us by dozens and scores since ever Mountjoy was ordered to Dublin, and every man of them recommended by some Catholic of note—men, I declare to you, Mary, that have scarce learnt yet to walk abroad in the sunshine, 'tis so lately they went in fear of a halter.'

'But the Catholics of note will soon tire of that game,' said I, 'when they find their rascals returned upon their hands like bad money.'

'But that's just what they're not,' said he. 'If they were, then all were going as we'd have it, we that have the good of the country at heart. There's scarce a man but has taken them on as fast as they have applied. Lundy himself hath made room for every Catholic that hath been sent to him, and is turning off the Protestants—it's the truth I'm telling you—to make room for them.'

It surprised me no whit to hear this of Colonel Lundy, though I meant not that my husband should divine it. But he did, and fell at once to excusing him.

'Oh, I know what you're thinking, Mary, for all so innocent a face as you wear; but you're wrong. He's no traitor, I'm sure; but in this matter he's misled, like many another honest

man. Sure, he hath Tyrconnel's orders, sent direct to himself, I believe, since Mountjoy's not in Derry. He's staunch enough, but he hath no stomach for controversy; he wants to humour the great folk that have fortune in their gift as far as ever he can with safety.'

'Call that staunch?' said I before I recollected myself.

'Ah, well,' said Captain Hamilton, 'let him that is without sin among us cast the first stone at him. There's not a man of us,' said he, who is himself far more apt to defy the powers that be than to truckle to them—'there's not a man of us but would like to keep well with headquarters could it be done. But Lundy's short-sighted in this affair; he can't see how unlikely it is that this Government should ever show favour to a Protestant were he never so abject, and he's taking a stick to break his own back in filling his regiment with Papists at any man's bidding. The next thing will be that, the ranks being Papist, they won't brook the command of a Protestant, and then the officers will be cashiered to make room for Catholics to suit the men.'

'Perhaps he'll even qualify for a command under such circumstances as these,' said I.

Truly I know not what urged me to speak so to Captain Hamilton of one that I desired to

see thrust out of his confidence; but so I did, and had my reward forthwith, as, indeed, I might have known.

'Now, Mary,' said Mr. Hamilton, 'you're most unfair to Lundy, and I'm sure I don't know why, for he's civil to a fault to every lady. But give me leave to say to you plainly for once that your suspicions of him are perfect nonsense. No, no! I may say to you in private that I think he carries compliance too far; and, faith! I told him the same thing to his face no longer ago than this very afternoon. But he's as good a Protestant as any of us. I'm certain he'd quit his command in an instant if he thought that honour required it. But,' added he, after a pause, 'it's an irritating thing, after all, to see him deliberately putting it out of his own power and out of the power of his friends to do anything else.'

A man convinced against his will, as the saying goes, *is of the same opinion still.* And sure 'tis no less true of a woman, though, indeed, I had been very happy to be convinced in this matter if I could. My dear and generous husband! even while I grieved for his excess of confidence, I loved it. He were less himself, and therefore less lovable, if he were more prudent; and perhaps the advantage were too dearly purchased at the price. For all that, he

that can see no man with his back to the wall without an impulse to take his stand beside him is like to give his wife many an anxious moment.

'*Well*,' said I, letting him have his way, 'and what course do you mean to hold yourself? Are you going forth to meet the trouble, or to wait for it at home? Though, after all, what you have done already leaves you little choice; your conduct to this very man is pretty like to bring about your ears the whole set that are for compliance.'

'Faith and indeed!' said he, 'and that's about all the good it hath done, I fear. A man can do but little for or against unless he hold a more important command than mine. But as to what I'll do in the future, that matter pretty well settles itself. I hold my commission under protest, as you know, and only until Mountjoy's return; I shall deliver it into his hands as soon as ever 'tis decent after he comes back. Then, being free of it, 'twill go hard but with the assistance of those I know of that are of the right way of thinking, we get something effectual set on foot for the defence of the province. We've had our warning; there are plenty that have no desire to sit with their hands folded waiting for their fate.'

This conversation, and yet more my husband's

manner herein, so unwontedly serious, left a deep impression on my mind—deeper, truly, than on his own, for all the seriousness was gone by the next afternoon when he rid back into Derry. I begged him for all sakes, when he was leaving the house, to remember his promise to me, and use every possible caution, at which he fell to laughing, and told me 'twas plain his neck was dearer to me than to himself, since I suffered such constant fear lest he should put it in peril.'

'And if it be,' said I—'as I would not wonder but it may—is there aught in that to blame?'

'Keep a quiet mind, sweetheart,' quoth he. 'It hath a certain value, even to myself.'

And so rid away, waving his hand.

'A merry-hearted gentleman as one could wish to see,' said a voice beside the doorway. And this was the voice of Rabbie Wilson, who, having nothing to do on the Sabbath afternoon, had come out to see his master ride away. 'Ay, madam,' continued he, observing that I marked him; 'he's the very same e'en noo that I mind him when he was a callan'; there was never a thing sae fashious but he'd tak' it lauchin'.'

'It's a habit I've thought at times that it would be good if he could lay aside,' said I.

For the times when I have the gravest doubts whether 'tis justifiable to treat serious matters lightly are those when Captain Hamilton takes that way in speaking of my fears.

'It's a thocht pagan, maybe,' said Rabbie; 'but there's a fine rantin' gallantry about it that's gey an' pleasin', too. Ay, my leddy, I'd be gey an' sweered to see the maister tak' his bit o' fashes like ither fowk, wi' the tear in's e'e.'

I, making meditation afterwards of all that had come and gone, and all that was like to come to pass, was one moment of his mind, and the next of my own. But things being as they were in Ulster, I think mine own had the uppermost at last, for a man's graces will not mend his neck should his gallantry lay it on the block.

This visit of Captain Hamilton's took place on the last Sunday of October; and it was about the Wednesday following, if my memory serve me aright, that there came an orderly soldier to Cloncally, bringing a letter to me from Lord Mountjoy. This was to say that he was on his way from Strabane to Derry, and desired to know if he might go about to Cloncally and sup with us. It was as though my very wish had been consulted, for had I been asked what favour I should desire of Provi-

dence, it had been no other than that Mr. Hamilton should have an opportunity to tell my lord Viscount of his conduct in the affair of these Irish recruits before Colonel Lundy had his ear. Accordingly, having despatched the orderly in the one direction, I lost no time in despatching a groom in the other with a letter to let Mr. Hamilton know whom I expected, and to desire he would bring whom he pleased to bear him company at supper. No sooner was he gone out of earshot and past recall than I began to repent me of an error; for, indeed, it was one, considering what I had at heart, to mention my lord by name. I might have been sure enough, and so I was, that if Lundy and he had come to words about the drafting, it was Lundy Captain Hamilton would invite to be his guest, so to avoid the look of taking an advantage of him. And so it proved, for when my husband rid into the court in the afternoon it was Colonel Lundy that rid beside him. Nor was there any doubt but something was amiss betwixt them, for whereas they had been wont to treat each other with some familiarity, they were now as full of ceremony as men that are newly acquainted.

'Faith and indeed!' I thought to myself, 'I have contrived to throw away the good that Providence set ready to my hand.'

Captain Hamilton bade me expect Wamphray Murray and Rosa to supper; but when Rosa arrived, it was not my brother that accompanied her, but her own, Wamphray desiring to be excused on account of an engagement that could not be postponed. This arrangement was none so disappointing to me as it might have been at another time, Mr. Browning having an authority and weight with him that Mr. Murray is something short of; and sure was I that if my husband's conduct should be viewed unfriendly (which yet I scarce dreaded), the influence of Mr. Browning would be thrown upon the side of the balance.

Lord Mountjoy's arrival followed hard upon theirs. To my surprise, he was alone, save for his servant and half a dozen soldiers of his escort. He was full of the news he brought—that the regiment was ordered to Dublin without delay. It had been affecting news to me had I been ignorant of Captain Hamilton's intention to resign; and so it was to Rosa, who was so. But as things stood, I was little moved by it. I was busy watching my lord, who on his part was busy watching his two officers; methought he was little surprised at the distance they observed to one another. No doubt he was prepared for something of the sort. For himself, he had plenty of talk, as

he always hath, and it lacked neither point nor wit. But to mine ear there was something in the voice that fitted neither to the matter nor to the manner of what he said. My lord, I thought, was putting a strain upon himself to seem the very same as usual; and even the men, that are for the most part (God help them!) but surface observers, were quickly aware of it. Perhaps there was that in the mind of each that opened his eyes for once. Once or twice, observing my lord Viscount, I saw his eyes dwell on Mr. Hamilton's face with that strange expression that on his former visit it had baffled my wit to fathom. This time also it both disquieted me and puzzled me; it was a riddle beyond my guessing; but none the less I was sure in my heart that its import was of evil, and evil that my lord would fain avert had he the power.

Whatever the danger, little doubt but frankness was an innocent man's best shield; and to give him the opportunity to exercise it, I very early left the gentlemen to their wine.

But Rosa and I had not been by ourselves above half an hour, when, something to my wonder, Lord Mountjoy followed us into the withdrawing-room. It is little his custom to leave his wine so early.

Presently, with one of those charming com-

pliments which he knows so well how to turn, he escorted Rosa to the harpsichord; she is known for one that hath a talent that way, and it seemed, as he manœuvred it, the most natural thing in the world that he should wish to hear her play. 'Tis with her he desires to speak, then,' thought I, it being clear enough that he had not followed without some reason. But, having beat time very civilly with his hand for a minute or two, he left her, and came back to where I sat. 'Ah!' thought I, 'tis with me.' And remembering his looks at the table, I knew further that he came to speak with me about my husband. Some inner impulse prompted me to tell him that I divined his wish.

'I see you wish to speak to me apart, my lord,' said I; 'and if I'm not mistaken, 'tis about Captain Hamilton.'

'You are right, madam, in both particulars,' said he; 'though I'm at a loss to think how you divined the last. Sure, to be sure, that you ladies have the hearts of men so universally at your feet, that it's no wonder if you read them like an open book.'

'Tis his lordship's way, as I said a minute ago, to turn a pretty compliment whenever he hath the chance; but this one rang something flat—it was as if his tongue spoke it without the guidance of his mind. Then he fell to

musing, like one that scarce knows how to open the matter he hath in hand.

Thinking to lessen his difficulty, I began to speak of the friendship that subsists between himself and Captain Hamilton.

'If one that is in the house to-night had said as much,' said I, 'I might fear to hear more. But I know I can trust your friendship for Captain Hamilton to speak of him as I would desire; or as I might myself, that know him the best of men.'

'Madam, you may,' said he, and paused again. 'I am about to speak of my friend to my friend's wife,' said he at last, speaking the word 'friend' with some force. 'And that's what daunts me.' And at the words he looked me in the face with an expression so strange upon his own that I in turn was daunted, and sat silent.

'Don't be afraid,' said he quickly. 'There's no cause, or at least not much, if you will show yourself as brave and prudent as I think you. I am about to put mine honour into your hands, Mrs. Hamilton,' he continued, lifting his eyes to mine. Question met question there; and yet it was not so much a question mine were full of, as an answer to that which he had said —an answer that my tongue strove in vain to frame. Being unable for all my striving to find

a word to say, I bowed my head for answer, a gesture that satisfied him. 'Tis safe there, I am well assured,' said he.

Then, with a sudden change of voice and manner, he went on quickly :

'But there's no time to lose; I must get back to the table before the others fall to wondering at my absence. It's very strange, Mrs. Hamilton, and raises all manner of suspicions in my mind, but the Lord Deputy hath had news of the conversation that passed at supper, that night I lay here on my way to Dublin.'

It did not greatly surprise me to hear it ; I thought I could have laid my hand upon the sender, and was on the very brink of saying so, Then I bethought me of my husband's opinion, and held my tongue.

'He is much incensed against Hamilton, and I must admit he hath some reason,' continued my lord Viscount. 'For he spoke most foolishly, considering his position, and that supposing his opinions were undoubtedly true, which they're not. I had much difficulty—but that's no matter now. Something new must have come to Tyrconnel's ears since I left him ; for this very day, as I was leaving Strabane, I was overtook by an express, desiring I would send Hamilton to Dublin under a strong guard, and that without delay.'

'I knew it!' said I, half choking. ''Tis this new matter of the Irish recruits. Ah, Lord Mountjoy, didn't I forecast evil in my heart from the first moment I knew he was remaining in the regiment in your absence? I was sure some harm would come of it.'

'Irish recruits!' said he. '*What* Irish recruits?—this is all news to me. But 'tis no matter now,' he went on, not waiting for an explanation. 'The thing is to save him; he couldn't remain in the service any way. Madam, if I send him to Dublin there's but one end to it.'

'I know,' I said. 'Lord Russell's—Algernon Sydney's.'

He nodded.

'They're savage,' said he. 'Their best friends can't deny it. But it's a hard service to require of a man, to deliver up his friend to his death, and that for a piece of mere folly of the tongue; for I do think that his words had no purpose behind them—then.'

'Of treason, or of sedition,' said I, 'none! Why, 'twas not until your lordship called him to account for them that he so much as thought of throwing up his commission.'

'You're sure of that?' he asked of me.

'Perfectly sure,' I replied to him.

'Ah!' said he, 'that goes far to settle the matter, then; that's what I've been turning

back and forth in my mind all day. Madam, I fear 'tis only too plain where my duty lies; I've had orders from them I'm bound to obey.' At that it seemed as if my heart would have stopped beating; and as for my Lord Mountjoy, I thought he was but little less agitated than I. 'But I can't do it!' he broke out; 'no, not though my refusal set me in his place. Your words have assured me of the thing I feared, that 'twas I that kept him within their power. By mine honour, I had no thought therein but for his own good! But for all that, except for me he'd have been free of his commission before ever Tyrconnel heard a word to his disadvantage. I can't have it on my mind that I first tied his hands—however unwittingly—and then sent him to Dublin, like a rat in a trap, to his death. No, not for all Tyrconnel's honours. I'll give him a chance to make his escape; and, madam, 'tis to this end I ask your help.'

'How?' I asked. It was with the greatest difficulty I formed the single word, for my lips and throat seemed as wooden as those of any puppet, and all but refused to answer to my will.

'Very simply,' said he. 'I will quarrel with him to-night—here, in his own house—on some pretence or other. I will order him to his own room under arrest. It will be your business to get him away before the morning.'

'I'll do it,' said I, feeling my courage come back with a rush, the moment I knew the thing I had to do.

'Understand me,' said my lord, with that in his voice which was both pleading and commanding. ''Tis out of no sympathy with his views I'm doing this. Had I relieved him of his commission when he desired it, I make little doubt he'd have been riding up and down the country by this time, organizing some sedition, but none so easy to lay hands on. He's a man that doesn't stand still, as you know. He'll get himself into further scrapes, I am very sure; and then, should I take him, 'twill be out of my power to show him favour. My duty is to the King, my master, whom he hath renounced. I may say it has been a difficulty of the hardest to choose between them this time. And if 'twere going to anything less than certain death——'

'My Lord Mountjoy,' said I, 'I scarce can wonder at your scruples; and I scarce can thank you for your decision. It is life to me, as well as to Captain Hamilton—that's all. If ever I can repay you—but that's impossible.'

He bent and kissed my hand.

'We part friends to-night,' said he, 'whatever the fortunes of the times may turn us to.'

'Never anything but friends!' said I, 'while I remember the kindness you've done to me and mine this day.'

He rose to go; but after what had passed between us, there was that in my heart that forbade me to let him go unwarned. Mistaken I might be, it was even likely, but to keep silence with such a suspicion brooding in my mind had sure been flat ingratitude.

'My lord,' said I, 'one moment. My mind misgives about one that is at your side. Perhaps I ought not to say so, but I can't be thankless enough to keep back a warning that hath the least chance of being of use to you. Be wary in your dealings with Colonel Lundy. 'Tis he, I do think, that hath betrayed our conversation to the Lord Deputy.'

'What makes you think so?' said he, knitting his brows.

'Ask a woman for her reason!' said I. 'I have none that can be put into words, but the next time he asks you a question that you would not answer to one you thought unfriendly, look you in his eyes, and be guided by what you see therein.'

'I think you're wrong,' said he, musing. 'Lundy's staunch enough to his friends, though he hath a queer way of crying with the hounds

and running with the hare. I think he is safe, Mrs. Hamilton.'

'It can harm none to use caution,' said I.

'No,' said he; 'but 'tis unnecessary, I'm persuaded.' And so left the room, without another word.

CHAPTER VI.

A QUARREL AND AN ARREST.

Rosa turned round about in her seat by the harpsichord, and looked at me with a smile.

'Now, there's many a man,' said she, 'would have thought it no more than manners to bestow a word of thanks upon me for my music before walking away in such a hurry. And there's many a woman,' quoth she most demurely, 'would have the grace to express some sense of the good office I've done her. Haven't I sat here playing for better than a quarter of an hour, though neither of you marked a note? What! not a word even now? Such thanklessness I never saw the like of!' And so turned round in her seat (for, indeed, I was in no mood for jesting, and had never a word to answer), and struck into another measure.

My eyes were fastened on the door by which the lord Viscount had quitted the room. Sure, I was sunk in musing, and yet they saw a thing

which for another moment my mind took no note of. This was that the door—the very door mine eyes were fixed on—was first most noiselessly pushed open, and then as stealthily shut. For one moment, as I said, this conveyed no meaning to my mind; the next, I promise you, it brought both meaning and fear. I sprang up from my seat by the fire, and opened the door as quick as ever I might; indeed, I think not many seconds passed ere I was in the passage, looking both to right and left for the intruder. It was perfectly well lighted both ways, but for all that there was no sign of any creature in it. Then I went forward to the staircase, and looked there for my spy, but never a soul could I discern. I leant upon the balustrade, scanning the polished oak steps, as though I thought to see footprints thereon that would enlighten me; and there came upon me the strangest feeling of approaching disaster—a certain expectation of mischance. One that is condemned to die may have the like, as every hour that passes brings him nearer to his inevitable doom. I went along the passage from end to end, opening every door and looking into every room, without finding, as they say, *either beast or body*. Then, much discomposed, I went back into my withdrawing-room. Rosa sat where I had left her, her fingers idle upon the

keys; the fire burnt bright and cheerily; the room was eloquent of home and peace, and yet it struck me with a sense of incongruity—there was no room in my mind for its comfortable brightness. Naked weapons, angry faces, the scaffold, the block, and things yet worse than these, filled it to overflowing. I would fain have been up and doing, had I known the things whereto I should set my hand.

The smile died from Rosa's face as she looked at mine.

'Why, Mary, what's the matter?' said she. 'You look as if you had seen a ghost.'

'There's either a ghost or a spy in the house, I believe,' said I, trying to make as though I jested; 'and I scarce know which is the worse.'

'Let it be a ghost, then,' said she, laughing. 'They're harmless creatures compared to the other sort. I'd rather have ten ghosts than one traitor to deal with.'

'We're not permitted the choice,' said I, 'or else I think I'd differ from you. Spies you may circumvent, but ghosts you can't.'

'Spies tell tales,' said she, 'and ghosts do nothing worse than frighten you.'

'They do that same most effectually,' said I, putting my hand to my heart, where was so obstinate a sinking as was hard to combat.

'Why, but truly,' said she, 'you do look

strange.' She left her seat and came to me, putting her arm about me. 'You did not really see aught to frighten you, Mary, did you?' she continued, smiling, 'either human or—otherwise?'

'I scarce can tell myself, dear heart,' I answered, feeling myself a fool, yet knowing myself to have reason in my folly.

It had eased my mind mightily to tell her everything—both what my lord Viscount had said and the other mystery—and yet I thought it better to forbear, for I knew myself the stronger woman of the two; yet here was I all but bereft of my wits by what had passed. Why, I thought, should I make her partaker of my terrible fear? So I tried to smile in answer to her smiling instead.

'Play to me, dear,' said I, willing to gain some minutes for meditation—'play to me, like David to Saul, and lay the evil spirit. A ghost should be easier laid than a devil, one should think, especially if 'tis an imaginary ghost.'

'And shall I be as good at the laying as David, do you think?' said she, a little more satisfied about me. And so began to let her fingers wander over the keys, where presently she struck into a dainty measure that fitted little with my mood.

Truly, I scarce marked it. I sat down in

my place by the fire, and tried to bring before my mind a clear picture of what was like to happen presently in the dining-room, and what I was to do to get my husband safe away before the morning. My lord Viscount's words, as I recalled them, laid the ghost far more effectually than Rosa's music. I could all but hear him speaking them: 'I will order him to his room under arrest. It will be your business to get him away.'

I put my head between my two hands, so to press help out of my brain, as it were. Away —where to? I asked myself. A hiding-place is nothing difficult to find in our part of the country; but a safe hiding-place, and one whence he could communicate with his friends, was another matter. And my lord had said we were to look for no further favour at his hands should Captain Hamilton fall into them again.

Away—I thought again, having no light on that point—but how? How to get him forth of the house, to begin with? My lord was to order him into his bed-chamber; now, that is on the second floor, and none so easy to steal away from. And even were that contrived, could I count upon his own consent? I asked myself. My husband hath a spirit so high that if he thought himself wrongfully accused, 'twas a great chance but he might refuse to go away

at all, and insist upon staying to stand his trial by court-martial. For of course my lord could give him no hint of his orders to send him to Dublin for his trial; nay, I fell to wondering whether I might myself without a breach of confidence towards my lord, for he had confided his honour into my keeping, and should a word of that leak abroad, where were it? That were a poor return for his friendship. But yet it was a weapon he had himself put into my hands, and even while I meditated how to use it most considerately, I thanked him from my heart for trusting me with one so effectual.

As I sat wringing my mind for an expedient, and finding none that seemed sufficient, there rose upon a sudden, from the vestibule below, a noise of voices loud in anger. 'Presumptuous' and 'insubordinate' we could clearly hear in the voice of Lord Mountjoy. Rosa got up from the instrument, and I from my seat, and so rapt had I been in my musing that I protest my alarm was as real as her own, and no acting, and this in spite of the warning my lord had given me. We ran together to the staircase, whence we could see and hear all that was a-doing in the hall; but before we came there my wits had come in place again, and I knew that this was no more than I had to expect. For Rosa, she was so pale that I had

given much to be able to tell her that which had been told to me. As this was wholly out of the question, I was even compelled to continue cruel. We leant together over the balustrade, looking and listening. The first man I saw was Cargill, with a face so fixed in dismay that 'twas like a mask, and with a silver serving-trencher half dropping from his hand, standing in the corner by the entrance-door. Leaning over, I could see all the rest—my husband standing very pale and proud, and Lundy beside him with his drawn sword in his hand. My Lord Mountjoy stood in the doorway of the dining-room, where his face was in the shadow, but his attitude was even more full of pride than Captain Hamilton's, I thought. He was the first to catch sight of Rosa and me at the top of the stair, and stopped in the midst of what he was saying. There was a moment's pause, and then my husband spoke.

'My lord Viscount,' said he, 'I would pray you to consider whether it can ever be the duty of a man to act against his conscience.'

'Sir,' answered Lord Mountjoy, 'a soldier that hath accepted a commission hath no business to scrutinize his orders or indulge himself in scruples. He is a man under command, and hath no responsibility of decision, but only of obedience. His duty, if he cannot conscien-

tiously carry out the orders he receives from his superiors——'

'Is to resign his commission, my lord, as it seems to me,' said Captain Hamilton, very calm, 'which I would beg you of your goodness to recall to mind that I endeavoured to do before your lordship's departure for Dublin a fortnight ago. Whether it be fair to hold me responsible for my disobedience to orders that I foresaw, and that I tried to throw up my commission for fear of——'

'Why, sir,' said my lord, 'what could it matter to you whether your company had Irish Catholics in it or not, or whether it consisted entirely of Irish Catholics, for the matter of that, when by your own showing you were but waiting my return to leave the army altogether.'

'I can scarce imagine you put that question in earnest, my Lord Mountjoy,' answered my husband. 'It's not a thing to promote the welfare of the country to have the army filled with Irish Catholics, as you well know, and, sure, the welfare of the country matters to every man that hath a stake in it.'

'It's not the business of any officer to criticise his orders, as I told you before,' said my lord. 'Gad! if every man in the army were to make himself the judge of everything

he's told to do, things were at a pretty pass indeed!'

'Your lordship's conduct is an unimpeachable example of your opinion,' said Mr. Hamilton, beginning to lose his temper, 'for you can scarce think this fair treatment of an ancient comrade and friend.'

'Man alive! can't you be silent?' said Lundy at his elbow.

'No, I can't, Lundy, and I won't, either, for 'tis shameful!' said Mr. Hamilton, turning upon him. 'Look at his face there, and say which of us is the one that's ashamed of his conduct.' My lord had taken a step forward, so that now he stood in the light beside the rest, and, in truth, he looked ill at his ease. 'By heaven!' said Captain Hamilton, 'he looks a traitor, and as for you, Lundy'—turning upon him almost with violence—'you look a fiend.'

'Captain Hamilton,' said my lord, putting visibly a force upon himself to be calm—indeed, I believe the last taunt had told home, and in his own despite his voice shook—'Captain Hamilton, this violence will avail you nothing. I have but acted in accordance with my views of the duty of a soldier; and, indeed'—at this the words seemed to escape from a leash, as one might figure it—'indeed, it does come hard on a man to treat an old friend and

comrade with so much severity; but I have no choice that I can see. Colonel Lundy, may I beg you will conduct Captain Hamilton to his bed-chamber, where he will remain under arrest till to-morrow morning?'

He was turning away, when I heard Lundy mutter something about 'parole,' a most spiteful suggestion from one that was so well aware of Mr. Hamilton's temper. Well he knew that his word once given had been an effectual fetter to him, and one he had never tried to rid himself of. His lordship knew it also, for which I was most thankful, though my heart gave one throb that all but choked me.

'Sir,' said he, turning on Mr. Lundy with a face that might well have struck him silent, 'I'm not in the habit of accepting suggestions from my subordinates.'

'It might be better if you did, for all that,' said Lundy, quite unabashed. 'Come away, Hamilton; I'll have to rope ye.'

'A guard at the door and at the window will be sufficient,' said my lord, 'and that no one enters the room.'

'My lord,' I exclaimed where I stood, 'may not I go to my husband?'

He looked up, and caught my eye.

'You may, madam; but no one else.'

His glance had a meaning in it that I tried to

fathom, but in vain. Perhaps it was some hint he wished to give me of the mode wherein I might contrive Captain Hamilton's escape. But even while I had been listening to them, a plan had sprung up full-grown, as one might say, in my head. It was as if a chart lay plain before mine eyes, with my course laid down thereon; and not my course alone, but every rock and shoal whereon my ship was like to strike or stick.

Here was the plan. Attached to my room there is a closet that is my wardrobe; it hath a door that is commonly kept locked, which opens into the servants' quarters. Nothing could be easier than that Captain Hamilton should leave the room by this door; but then, of course, began the danger of detection. Four of the escort of six soldiers that had accompanied my lord would be in that part of the house; 'twas very possible that one of these might recognise him. But even while I thought of that risk, I thought of half a dozen expedients to lessen it. The sentinel that was to be placed below the window in the court was a more serious obstacle. Yet there was a way of passing him that seemed mighty simple, as I considered it. Would Fortune but stand my friend, it appeared to me that Captain Hamilton's escape was as good as made.

The great danger was lest his promise, refused by my lord (with how much of friendship!) should be pledged to Lundy before I could prevent it. And in truth, as he came upstairs in Lundy's custody, it seemed as though this were about to be done in my very hearing.

'You are a friend, Lundy, after all,' said he, 'and I beg your pardon for the words I made use of to you a minute ago. I thank you for the proposal you made to my lord, though it had no success.'

Could anything seem more likely than that Lundy should hereupon renew the offer? But he forbore. Perhaps he feared that Lord Mountjoy should hear it, for the door of the dining-room stood wide open.

As if everything conspired to forward my design, the two gentlemen, setting foot upon the landing where we stood, discovered Rosa to be on the very point of fainting. I had never marked her, being so rapt in my planning. But here was the very diversion I desired; and in the confusion of calling to Cargill and to Margery, I succeeded in whispering to Captain Hamilton that he should on no account pledge his *parole d'honneur* to attempt no escape; for I had a plan that seemed feasible enough, to get him away.

Then, pretending more care for Rosa than

I fear I felt, for truly it was no time for me to abandon myself to pity for another woman's weakness, when a man's life hung on mine own, I desired to have Mr. Browning informed of his sister's state. As was to be looked for, he was with us in a moment. I told him, to have the opportunity of a word apart (for his assistance was most essential to my plan), that there was cold water in plenty in my room, would he but help me to fetch it. And the moment we were within the door, I begged him to ask a pass of my lord Viscount, for himself and his servant to leave at midnight. He had no servant in the house; but he smiled, understanding me as a woman might have done.

'I fear 'tis of no use, and that he will not grant it,' said he. 'But I will ask it.'

'Ay, do,' said I.

And in another moment we were with the rest. Not one of them seemed to have marked our absence; but Rosa had somewhat recovered, and was fit to be supported back into the withdrawing-room. It was Captain Hamilton's arm she clung to. To be sure, he was in a sort her brother, and she thought his danger greater than it was. Colonel Lundy kept as close to him as his shadow, and at that I could have smiled, for my warning was given. It was Cargill I wished to speak to at that moment,

and that was so easy that it needed no contriving. I desired he would have two horses in readiness for Captain Browning, who would leave Cloncally at midnight *with his servant.* At that Cargill opened his eyes. Then I ordered further that he would bring a suit of his own clothes at once into Captain Hamilton's bed-chamber; and at that he smiled, *smoking*, as they say, my whole plot. But it mattered nothing, for he is as true as steel. Then I went into the room after the rest, to find Colonel Lundy in the act of ordering my husband into his bedroom. He had, he declared, allowed him already more grace than he might be able easily to answer for to my lord. It was to no purpose that Captain Hamilton begged for only a few minutes longer, that he might first see Rosa perfectly restored to herself; Lundy was inexorable. Not another moment would he grant; Captain Hamilton must go at once into his prison. Hereupon Rosa professed herself too weary and too sick at heart to ride back to Derry that night. It was much my will that she should remain at Cloncally, and I would have gone with her to see her comfortably bestowed in her chamber; but Lundy had a word to say to that.

'Mrs. Hamilton,' said he, 'if you wish to remain with your husband, as my lord hath

given you leave, you must even leave Mrs. Murray to the care of your waiting-woman, and come with us. When once I have shut the door on Hamilton, I shall not suffer it to be opened again to-night, I promise you.'

In vain I pleaded, promising to come alone to the door of the room; he was harder to move than any rock. So I even did as he ordered, finding my ill opinion of him nowise lessened by his harshness and the manners of a bluff soldier that he had assumed. I placed Rosa in her brother's arms; I kissed her, and gave Margery charge to tend upon her in my place. Then I went into mine own room, followed by Captain Hamilton. But before I could open to him a word of what I meant to do, Colonel Lundy came in after us, and shut the door behind him.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW ONE MADE HIS ESCAPE FROM CLONCALLY, THOUGH HIS GAOLER SAT AWAKE AND SAW HIM.

He came in, as I said, and shut the door behind him; he gave a glance around, and then locked the door and put the key in his pocket. After that he came forward in a very leisurely manner to the fireplace, beside which the Captain and I were standing. Without saying a word, he drew in an elbow-chair and seated himself with something of ostentation, as one who should say: 'Mark me; here I am, and here I mean to stay, whether you like it or no.'

We looked at him for an explanation, not a little astonished at conduct so extraordinary, to which look he answered nothing, save by a smile that had something in it both of triumph and of malice. It set me thinking. It was the face of a man that had turned the tables on one that had thought to set him at a disadvantage.

But why, I wondered, should Lundy's face wear such a look when he regarded Captain Hamilton? Was there some special ill-blood between them whereof I knew nothing? Was it Lundy, I wondered, that had spied upon my Lord Mountjoy and me? Had he heard my lord declare his design to spare my husband? And if he had, was he concerned to baulk the one of his wish and the other of his poor chance for life and freedom? I shrank at the time from imputing so much baseness to any man that might claim the title of a gentleman, even one in whom I had so little trust, and for whom I had so little liking. But for all my desire to avoid the kindred baseness of undue suspiciousness, the thought sprang up in my mind again and again that night, nor could I rid myself of it afterwards, when I came to think the matter over as a thing that is past and done with.

In the meantime Lundy had brought out his pistols, and was making a great show of looking to their priming, and renewing the same. We stood and looked at him the while, waiting to be enlightened upon the subject of what he meant to do. But not a word passed till Lundy had finished the reloading of his pistols. Then at last he looked up and spoke to us, with that evil smile again upon his face.

'Sir,' said he, 'and madam, you no doubt expect me to *efface myself*, as the Frenchmen say; to sit without there upon the landing and watch the door rather than yourselves. Well, 'tis asking a good deal of a man on so cold a night; but I will do it if you, Hamilton, will but pass your word to remain where you are and make no attempt to escape.'

'I will pass my word to you very faithfully,' said Captain Hamilton, much nettled at the man's manner, and still more, I believe, at the want of courtesy he had shown to me in seating himself in my presence without my leave—'I will pass my word to you very faithfully, sir, to embrace the very first opportunity that offers of getting myself out of this scrape.'

'Mighty well, sir,' said Colonel Lundy; 'you will, then, have to endure my company for the night, an infliction which I protest I'm grieved to impose upon you.'

He spoke with a certain surface smoothness and quiet which did not conceal in the least the fact that he was crossed and chafed inwardly.

'Why, sir, you don't mean——' said Mr. Hamilton, and stopped.

'To intrude upon you? Oh, but I do, sir,' said Lundy in reply. 'My lord Viscount, below there in your dining-room, may have no objection that I should be the scapegoat

for his manifest design of letting you off; but I know better than to go into such a snare. No, sir; you were given into my charge, and, will you nill you, I will render you up to him to-morrow morning; and on purpose to run no risks, I mean to watch you all night. Not but what I might leave you, I believe, and run but little, for with a sentry under your window, and another at each of the house-doors—you see, I've taken the liberty to add to my lord's precautions, even without his consent—and with myself outside your room-door on the landing, I think you'd be pretty safe. But I'll risk nothing; you are subtle, both of you; perhaps you thought I marked you not whispering together at the top of the stairs. Either give me your word, or here I stay.'

Here was a pretty back-turn of that *fickle jade Fortune*, as men with reason call her. After so falling in with my plans, that I thought them all but accomplished, thus to leave us in the lurch! Was it not a scurvy trick? Hope began to run out of my heart as quickly as the sand out of an hour-glass when 'tis turned about, leaving it empty for the incoming, not of despair, but of anger. And, I promise you, hope ran out and anger in the faster when presently Lundy very coolly rose up from the chair he had taken, and began peeping here

and prying there throughout the room. It was going beyond his commission, and so, with mighty little ceremony, I told him. Before long he came to the door of the cupboard whereon I had built so much of my plan of escape; it was locked, but he scrupled not to require the key of it.

'Tis my private wardrobe, sir,' I told him.

It was scarce worth the pain of struggling; but yet I desired to be as prudent as ever I could.

'And what of that, madam?' returned he. 'I am, as it were, the warder of a prison to-night, and must make myself certain that there is no precaution overlooked nor no door of escape left open. May I pray you will give me the key at once?'

I protest I meant not to look to Mr. Hamilton for any interference; but in my embarrassment my eye wandered towards him and caught his, and the next moment he was, as one might figure it, at Lundy's throat.

'Sir,' said he, 'I protest I'm at a loss to understand your meaning or your manners. Is it to insult my wife you are after? Do you think she has had time to conceal a rescue-party in her wardrobe since my lord put me in your custody?'

Mr. Lundy looked at him with the same

mocking smile his face had worn when he entered the room.

'You don't want to provoke a quarrel with your gaoler, do ye now, Hamilton?' said he. 'Because even your assurance can scarce expect that he'll indulge you in it. Come, sir,' with a sudden change of manner, 'stand out of my way, will you? And you, madam, give me the key, before I'm driven to call in the assistance of force, for which'—and behold, he was back to his smooth manner again, soft as ever—'I believe you'd be more sorry yourself than I.'

I gave him the key, but with a very ill grace, and the next moment our poor little door of escape—as, indeed, I had meant it to be—was discovered.

'Aha, madam!' said he, coming out of my wardrobe, 'have I put my finger on your pretty little scheme? And you, sir, highty-tighty, high and mighty, 'tis not so much the insult to your good lady, I conceive, that you're so apt to resent, as the discovery of your own plans. Well, let him laugh that wins, as they say. I have found you out, in spite of your braggart loud words and your face of innocence.'

Captain Hamilton knew nothing, I believe, of the other door to my cupboard, and he looked thunder-stricken at Lundy's discovery. For me, I murmured something to that effect,

but so feebly that my voice was hardly audible to either of the gentlemen.

'What's that you say, madam?' said Lundy. 'Hamilton knew nothing of it? A pretty story, indeed, considering that this is his own house, wherein he was born and bred up! But I pardon you for a tale that can hoodwink no one, because it shows you to be at the very end of your resources.' Here he came out of the cupboard, which he had been again examining, and proceeded to shut and lock the inner door. 'I will even make assurance surer,' said he, 'for your pains.'

And with that he took out the key of that door likewise, and put that, as well as the other two, into his pocket.

'Colonel Lundy,' said I, 'do me one favour. Give me out of my wardrobe one mantle, I care not which; I am cold;' and so I was in truth, cold to the heart, cold in the heart and in the courage, as well as in body.

Lundy opened the door again, and gave me the very first that came to hand, that which hung on the back of it, the great old mantle that I wear still when I go abroad of a chilly morning or night. He even made as if he would have wrapped it about me, but I endured not to be touched by him, and drew back from him with so much haste that he was angered.

'As you please, madam!' said he, with a tone in his voice more harsh and snarling than he had before permitted himself to use. 'As you please; it is your own fault if you will have me for an enemy instead of a friend. And now, Hamilton, you can scarce blame me if I use more rigour towards you than I was disposed to at the first. Sit down on that settle'—pointing to one.

Captain Hamilton obeyed him without a word.

'And now, sir, I give you warning that if you move from where you sit, without leave asked of me and given, I will shoot you as I might shoot a rabbit. You saw me load my pistols;' and with that he took one in his hand and sat down where he had been at first.

''Tis not for me to blame you, Lundy,' said Mr. Hamilton, 'after what hath come out, though 'tis a hard way of treating an old comrade, and one that hath never harmed you. You must watch your prisoner, of course, though I think you show yourself more suspicious than there's any need for. For I protest to you that I had no recollection of that door of communication; nor, I believe, had Mary here any more than I.'

'Oh yes,' said I, unable to bear this; 'I remembered it very well.'

At that Lundy smiled, supposing, I believe, that I had given up the contest; and so, indeed, for the moment I had.

'Am I, like my husband,' I asked of him coldly, 'to remain in one place on pain of being shot?'

'You, madam,' he returned, 'may move about the room as you please, so you come not near my pistols;' and with that he laid the one of them across his knees; the other he placed upon the mantelpiece ready to his hand.

I could not do less than thank him for the leave he had granted me to move about, though my words were, as his conduct merited, of the coldest. Then I placed myself on the settle beside my dear husband. Colonel Lundy rose from his seat beside the fire, and began, pistol in hand, to pace up and down the room; at first steadily and soldier-like, a sentry on duty, as one might say, but after a time his steps grew slower and slower, and he seemed like a man sunk in thought. There came a knock to the door of the room; instead of going himself to challenge the newcomer, he made me a sign with a great show of authority to do it. But I, having no mind to betray any friend into a difficulty, sat still in my place and took no notice.

The knock was repeated, and followed quickly by a question.

'Is Mrs. Hamilton within, and can I have speech of her?'

It was Mr. Browning's voice, and I went to the door at once, Colonel Lundy placing himself at my side, so that he might hear whatever passed as well as I. I determined that he should hear nothing, whatever Mr. Browning had come to tell me, but what was meant for his ears, and that supposing I checked something of what was meant for mine own.

'I am here, Mr. Browning,' I said, 'and so likewise is Captain Hamilton, and Colonel Lundy is with us; he hath adopted this Scriptural fashion of watching his prisoner for his greater security. I am sorry to have to desire you will speak loud enough to be heard through the closed door, for the Colonel hath already refused—in your hearing, I believe—to open it again to-night.'

At that I stole a look at Lundy where he stood by my side, and though he caught it, and tried to look unconcerned, I perceived with some satisfaction that there was in his countenance the look of one that hath received a check.

'I came merely to explain a thing to you,' said Mr. Browning outside the door. 'My lord hath granted me leave to ride to Derry to-night with my servant, leaving this at any

time before midnight. Now, if I may, I would be fain to wait here till the very latest of my leave to know how Rosa keeps.'

'Is she worse?' I asked of him.

'No; better,' said he. 'But she hath not fallen asleep, so Mistress Margery tells me; and if I might be sure that no one in the house should be inconvenienced by it, I would even delay my riding until I heard that she had, or until it is as late as my pass allows.'

'He'd better stay the night, hadn't he?' said Captain Hamilton where he sat. 'Ask him if he will not.'

I put the question as desired, caring but little whether the answer were 'Yes' or 'No.' What did it matter, forsooth, whether he went or stayed, seeing that his 'servant' was so little like to be forthcoming? But the answer, of course, was 'No,' that he must be in Derry before the morning.

'Can I,' said he, 'do any business there for either of you?'

I put the question to Captain Hamilton, who sat too far from the door to hear distinctly what was said at the outside of it; Lundy, for all his listening, never took his eyes off him. He shook his head.

'Only,' said he, 'if Mr. Browning, while it suits his convenience to be here, will bear my

lord Viscount company, and see that he be worthily attended to his bed-chamber when he retires, he will do me a very brotherly service.'

'I believe my lord is even now retiring,' said Mr. Browning. 'I will go and see that he lacks nothing;' and so, calling a 'Good-night' to us, he went.

I turned away from the door and went back to my old place, mightily discouraged and sick at heart. Here were all things in readiness for Captain Hamilton to ride to Derry were he but ready to go, but this second readiness seemed a thing past hope of attainment. One thing a little comforted me, however, and this was that Lundy seemed but little less moody than I myself.

'Ye were meant for a conspirator, madam, I find,' said he to me, permitting himself that snarling tone I had remarked before.

'You have little reason to say so, Colonel Lundy!' said I, taking his meaning plain enough, but choosing to make as though I did not.

He drew down his brows at me, as though I were a child to be frowned into reverence. At that, seeing that he thought himself worsted, though in so slight a matter, my spirits began to rise again, and at the rise of my spirits my brain

began again to ponder the plan of the escape. Was all so hopelessly lost as I had been thinking? I asked myself. I fell to turning the ways and means back and forth in my mind, and presently a thing occurred to me that had hope in it. In another moment it seemed to have so much, it stood out so complete and, as I thought, so feasible, that it sent the blood burning into my face like sudden pain. I dared not look at Lundy lest he should see my thought written in mine eyes. But I sat still in my place pondering it for half an hour perhaps or better, till I saw the thing as plain in my head as I had the former plan that had miscarried. And after that I continued to sit still, perhaps as long again, desiring not to move in the matter too soon, which were destruction. By that time the house was quiet to absolute silence, and it was likely that all were asleep save only those whose business it was to watch.

The fire, too, had burnt low, which was my signal, as well as my pretext; but I dared not to go near it without leave, because of the pistol on the mantelpiece, which Lundy had forbidden me to approach. So I sat up, like one rousing herself out of a doze; in truth, we had all been silent enough to have passed for sleepers. I pressed my husband's hand, to assure myself that he was not, and at the

answering pressure I held it for one moment to my heart. This was to give him notice that I was about to attempt something, so to ensure his attention, and his aid when I should need it. Certes, 'twas a warning he could not choose but heed, for its beating was so strong that there was no other strength left in my body, neither to breathe, nor to hear, nor to see. My throat was as dry as a sanded page; my ears were full of the sound of rushing wind; there was a kind of blackness between my eyes and whatever they tried to look at. But it was very needful to hear and to see and to speak, even to speak calmly and in my ordinary voice, so I grasped at my will as one grasps the bridle of a runaway horse; I forced my heart down out of my throat by main striving. For one mighty moment I lifted up a voiceless prayer to heaven; then I sat up and spoke to Lundy. And, to mine own wonder, I spoke plain and quiet; my voice sounded in my own ears even unconcerned.

'Sir,' said I, 'who's to mend the fire?'

'Well, I can scarce do it,' said he, stretching himself. 'But you may, if you desire it.'

I rose, and went forward slowly to the fireplace; I stooped over it, bringing the brands into place that were scattered; and as I stooped, I contrived to let my great cloak slip from my

shoulders, as if by accident. It lay beside me as I lifted the fresh billets that lay ready on the hearth, and piled them on the old, making a great show of deliberateness, so to gain time. For my hands were cold to numbness, and my knees seemed too weak to support me, even while I knelt.

Then I rose slowly to my feet, and it was upon a sudden as though a flame of fire flashed through me from head to foot, turning me to steel. I stooped slowly for my mantle, and shook it out, as though to wrap it round me, but instead of that, I wrapped it, quick as lightning, round the head and arms of Lundy, seated in the chair at my side. I wrapped it round him in fold after fold, before ever he had time to struggle; having so much of vantage, 'tis even possible I might have mastered him by myself, but I had no need, for Captain Hamilton was by my side in an instant. He took the pistol from Lundy's knee; had he taken thought to fire that, it had gone ill enough with my husband and with me. But by Heaven's favour vouchsafed to us, in the sudden bewilderment of my attack, he put his hands up to draw away the cloak from his face, not down to grasp and fire the pistol that lay on his knees.

'Quick, Mary!' said Captain Hamilton, drawing the cloak still closer round Lundy's face;

'make haste; fetch me a rope or something, to tie him. We mustn't murder the man.'

There was no rope at hand, but I bethought me of an excellent substitute; I whipped a sheet off the bed, and tore it into wide strips that would bind him every whit as safely. I had certainly grudged it bitterly, at any other time, to destroy the good Hollands linen in such prodigal fashion. But a woman's pride in her plenishing is but as the small dust in the balance, when her husband's life and liberty are the weights in the other scale.

Captain Hamilton took one of the bands of linen, and passed it quickly two or three times round Lundy's body and the back of the chair, tying it firmly behind, I taking my turn to hold the mantle firmly in its place. This done, he unwrapped a fold or two thereof, and drew down Lundy's arms; these in like manner he secured to the back of the chair and to his body, tying them securely just above the elbows.

'Now,' said he, 'Mary, take you one of the pistols; be ready to hold it to his head the moment I uncover his face; if he attempt to call out, shoot him as he'd have shot me.'

'I will,' said I, taking the pistol.

I thought we had made good speed in securing him; but for all our haste, by the time we unwrapped the cloak from his face, his breath

was so far gone that there was little fear of his crying out. His wit was not gone, however, though his breath was spent, and so I placed the muzzle of the pistol against his temple.

'We will do you no harm, Mr. Lundy, if you will be still,' said I, 'and we will let you get your breath before we gag you; but if you attempt to give any alarm, I will shoot you dead on the instant.'

After that warning, he sat still enough, if, indeed, he could have gathered breath for a proper halloo, by the time Mr. Hamilton gagged him, which I hardly think. The only thing that then remained to do, for safety, was to fasten his legs to the chair as we had his arms; that done, it was almost laughable to see the man as helpless as a wooden image, that had been our master a short ten minutes before. Laughing at him was the last thing in my thoughts, for all that. The moment I thought my husband's peril past, I fell to trembling again, like any fool, as if there were nothing more to do to get him away. But oh the thankful heart! If ever a woman were rapt in thanksgiving to Heaven, that woman was I, and the time was then.

There was no difficulty after he was set so helpless in his chair in getting the keys, which he had put into the pocket of his coat; I judged,

from what he had said when he came into the room, that there was no sentry at the door of the room, therefore I chose the key of that one. Fearing lest the smallest oversight might put in peril that which had been gained, I oiled it before I put it in the lock ; it turned without a sound, and I peeped out. The landing was empty—Captain Hamilton was free.

He turned upon the door-sill, however.

'Upon my word, Mary,' said he, 'I scarce can think to leave him in such a state ; he would have taken my word, you know. If you will pledge me yours, Lundy, to give no alarm till morning——'

Again that evil light sparkled in Colonel Lundy's eyes. I knew that he would promise, and I knew that he would break his word without a scruple. So without a scruple I put in mine own.

'Nay,' said I, 'but if he be found tied up like this and gagged, 'tis sure and certain that no blame will light on him for your escape ; 'tis an impossibility on the face of it for him to stay you or to alarm the house. But if you loose him, who will be his witness that he was not your accomplice ? My word would go for little in such a matter, I cannot but think. Better leave him as he is, dear James ; it's not a very comfortable night he will pass, indeed,

but he runs no danger to life or limb, and it may save his reputation from a possible stain.'

Had I doubted the wisdom of the counsel I was giving, the fierce look of disappointment in the man's eyes would have confirmed me. To be sure, he was suffering some discomfort, and before long would even be suffering pain; but there was more in it than that. The man was not fit to be trusted; of that I was as sure as if I had seen him perform a treachery. Captain Hamilton had never shared my ill opinion of him; his anger against him for his conduct that evening was all melted away now that he was at his mercy, and it went sorely against the grain with him to leave him tied up as he was. He was for turning back again to loose him after he was actually on the stairs, but, unwilling to cross my earnest wish, he let himself be over-ruled, desiring only that as soon as I should judge it to be safe, and he be beyond pursuit, I would at least unfasten the gag.

There was now but one danger to run from the other side — to wit, the passing of the sentries at the doors, who were so well acquainted with Captain Hamilton's appearance; but from our own they appeared to multiply around us. Cargill's transports might almost have published his master's escape to

the whole house. I went near to wishing he were gagged as fast as the enemy upstairs. Captain Hamilton's own repugnance to leave me was like to be another danger; he seemed scarce able, for all that had passed, to bring his mind to it.

'You've saved me, Mary,' he said, again and again, 'but I doubt 'tis at some peril to yourself. How can I leave you to face it alone?'

'Don't think of it,' I told him. 'I run no risk at all, I believe. Lord Mountjoy is none of your furious men, like Jeffries, to revenge himself on a wife for taking the part of her husband.'

'Ah, but if he should?' said Captain Hamilton. 'How shall I hear how he takes it? How shall I learn how it goes with you, Mary, when he knows of my escape and the part you've taken in it.'

'I can't help agreeing with Mrs. Hamilton,' said Mr. Browning; 'my lord is not the kind of man to be a hard judge to her, or to any woman, acting in such a case. But we must get to horse,' said he; 'my leave expires, you know, at twelve o'clock. It would be a poor return for what your wife hath done to lose the fruit of it out of mere delay. Come, Hamilton; make haste and disguise yourself.'

'Disguise myself, sir!' exclaimed Mr.

Hamilton. 'To what end? I shall do nothing of the sort, you may rest assured. Once past the sentry, I'm as safe here as if I were in Holland.'

'No doubt,' said he, 'but it's needful to pass him unknown, you see, for were he to give the alarm, who knows whether you might get clear away? And were he to fail in his duty, you'd do no more than to put him in your own shoes, which were an ill return for any favour he might show you.'

'Very well said, Mr. Browning,' said I. 'Come, James'—holding out Cargill's coat that he had laid ready—'you won't be too high-minded to wear this, since 'tis to ease my mind.'

'Ah, Mary,' said he, 'even have your own way with me; you have done what you liked with me since ever I knew you, and, faith! it's not to-night I'm going to rebel.'

Cargill, armed with Lord Mountjoy's permit to Mr. Browning, went out to the stable to get the horses. We stayed together where we were, and Captain Hamilton began to give me some directions. I asked him whither he meant to ride.

'Indeed,' said he, 'I think I'd better keep that to myself, hadn't I? You'll be safer wanting the knowledge of my address to-morrow morning.' And then he fell again to

deploring the need that I should face the morrow morning without his presence.

At that Mr. Browning put in his word.

'My lord granted me my pass on the pretext of business,' said he, 'and appearances, I suppose, must be kept up. But what's to hinder me from riding back as soon as I've seen you in safety? Give me the charge of Mrs. Hamilton's welfare to-morrow——'

'You are a good friend, Browning,' said my husband; 'I'll never forget this.'

'And I doubt not,' said Mr. Browning, taking Captain Hamilton's hand, which he held out to him—'I nothing doubt but we can get word to you when once we know your hiding-place.'

'I'll leave word of that in my quarters in Derry,' said Captain Hamilton, rather grimly.

Whereat I smiled, thinking it no more than a jest.

And now we could hear the horses' feet at the door; we could hear the sentry's voice as he challenged Cargill. It was time for us to tear ourselves apart—a thing that seemed a sheer impossibility. He had the worst of that, but I did not dare say more than I had done already to lighten his burden. I was well enough assured that my lord would permit no harm to come to me for what I had done, but

I could not say so. He left a tear upon my face as he kissed me for good-bye; it shamed me, for my eyes were dry. And yet I knew not whither he went, nor what dangers he might have to face before I saw him again.

Mr. Browning went forward to open the door, but my husband bade him wait another moment.

'Mary,' said he, 'now that I bethink me of it, there are some of my men in the regiment too good to be lost sight of; if they be discharged, see if you can find something for them to do about the place; they may be better than gold to us yet. See, if any man come to you with this token, "From Derry to the Rose," know that he comes to you from me. Greet him with this counter-sign, "Stands the town in the old place still?" and if he reply, "Nay, the half of it is across the lough at the Waterside," then find that man a place, either here or with a known friend; and this as you value a true man, and one that is faithful to me.'

'I will,' said I.

And then Mr. Browning began again to open the door.

Again my husband stopped him. He had no sense of any danger to himself in such delays; it was the thought of that in which he supposed me to stand that filled his mind.

'How can I leave you so?' said he—'how can I? I would I left you in Wamphray's charge; I would there were some man with you to stand beside you to-morrow morning.'

'Have not I promised to do what I can?' said Mr. Browning.

'You have, and I thank you,' said my husband—'I thank you, and I beg your pardon for appearing to slight you; but you're not her brother, Browning; she hath no claim on you.'

'She is sister to my sister,' said he, 'and that is a claim I shall be proud and happy to meet with a brother's service, so you will honour me by allowing it.'

'You make me everlastingly your debtor,' said Captain Hamilton, taking my hand, and putting it into Mr. Browning's, who touched it with his lips.

'And now,' said he, 'we must get to horse in earnest; we are here too long. Madam,' said he to me, 'granting that men and captains may respect your sex and treat you with forbearance, 'tis more than we have any right to expect from the night airs. Pray stand away from the door before I open it to ride away with my servant. You see, Master Servant,' said he to Captain Hamilton, 'if I be not ready to discharge the trust you have reposed in me, even in so trifling a matter as the risk of a chill.'

It was kindly done of him to attempt to rattle, and perhaps it got my husband away from me with less of pain than anything else could have done; but after all our whispering and speaking low, I went near to crying out aloud as the door closed behind them, and though mine eyes had never a tear in them—shame on them for their dryness!—it was an old, old broken woman I felt as I climbed the stairs. It seemed a long, long journey from the hall to the door of mine own room, where I had Captain Hamilton's errand to do. This time I found Colonel Lundy exceeding ready to signify his promise to be silent till the morning; when once the gag was off him, he was willing to add his oath to his word if I required it. But I judged him safe enough when I had shut the door upon him, leaving him bound still in his chair, and then I went to Rosa's room, and told her all that had been done since we had left her; after that, for all that was yet uncertain, I was presently as sound asleep as any infant in its cot.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW THERE CAME A MESSAGE OUT OF DERRY TO MRS. HAMILTON.

'Tis a strange thing, and hath the look of a premeditation of fate to discredit our forecasting, how rarely the thing we confidently expect comes to pass. That which we have hoped for is set beyond our reach, and that which we have dreaded passes us by. And even if the thing itself do come about, the circumstances that attend it are all other than we looked for; so that 'tis of no use in the world to look forward and plot and contrive and plan out our behaviour. Far wiser were it, could one so rule one's own spirit, to meet good and evil alike with unconcern, trusting to be found sufficient to any need, either of thankfulness or of fortitude.

Here was my husband, gone from me in anxious apprehension of danger and trouble to me that I knew to be unfounded, though it was denied me to make him sharer of my knowledge.

Yet, though I saw that his carefulness for the same was trouble merely wasted, I could not take the lesson to myself, nor evit to fall into a like prodigality. My lord, I knew, would stand between me and scath; but yet, for his own name, I could not see how he should avoid some show of severity. For Lundy, I looked for nothing better at his hands than a malicious endeavour to revenge his disappointment on me that had brought it about. I have no liking to be rated, and had none, certainly, either to the situation or to the outlook. In the early morning, when the house was full of the noise of the discovery of Mr. Hamilton's escape, running and scuffling, and calling indoors and out, and blaming of the sentries in the courtyard under my windows (poor fellows! what could they tell, save that the Captain had rid away for Derry with his servant towards twelve of the clock, according to his pass?), I would have given much to be anywhere else in the world than in Cloncally. *Any Bush had been my Bield*, as the saying is. I fell to listening for the sounds of Mr. Browning's return, as though it were my salvation to have the support of his presence. And then there came into my mind a new fear, and one so terrible that I fell next to desiring his absence yet more fervently—all but praying, in sooth, for something that might delay his

coming till after the departure of my lord and the Colonel.

This was the fear: That one or both of these gentlemen might suspect who the servant might have been, and question Mr. Browning. I judged him a man of too open a temper to have much talent in evading questions. Were he once convicted of abetting Mr. Hamilton's escape, was it not even too likely that he might be thrust forthwith into his danger? And that were as much as to put the fetters on Mr. Hamilton's wrists, for nothing could be more certain than that he would return at his best speed, either to free his friend or share his punishment. If it is true that love drives out fear, 'tis no less true that a great fear drives away a small one, so that I protest I never carried a lighter heart to a merry-making than that wherewith I heard myself summoned, still in the gray of the morning, to attend my lord Viscount's inquiry as soon as I possibly could. Certes, I made no long tarrying, but was below, with none but Margery to attend me or keep me in countenance, in a far shorter space of time than they looked for.

Here I found, now that things were come to a point, that the trouble met half-way was but trouble thrown away. I was not rated in the least; in truth, there was not a word said to me

that need have caused me disquiet had I foreseen it.

My lord was bound to question me; but he did it wondrous civilly. I took refuge in my right of silence, and desired to know if there was any law that could compel a woman to give information that might lead to her husband's harming.

He desired upon this that I would not be contumacious; but to that I had a ready answer.

'My lord,' said I, 'I make no denial that I got Mr. Hamilton away; and Colonel Lundy here can very well tell you the manner of it.' At which methought his lordship's face a little twitched, as though he had heard of it already. 'As to saying anything more, or anything,' I continued, 'that can lead to my husband's capture—— My lord, I shall have no objection to reply to any question you would expect my Lady Mountjoy to answer, supposing you to stand in Captain Hamilton's case, and she in mine.'

This, I thought, a little staggered my lord.

'But, madam,' said he, 'I can't let you ride off in such a fashion as this. Any question,' said he, 'that it might be the duty of my wife to answer, I expect you will answer the like.'

'Even so be it,' said I; 'I am content. And

you yourself shall be the judge (as indeed you are) whether it can be the duty of any woman to say a word that can put her husband in jeopardy, either of liberty or of life.'

On this matter, knowing something of his mind, I made bold to speak out, and so he told me.

'You are bold, Mrs. Hamilton,' said he, 'though I cannot but pardon your boldness, for there is some truth in what you say.'

At this, seeing my advantage (and knowing that in his mind I stood already clear of blame), I even took it, and pushed the matter home.

'You shall likewise be the judge, my lord,' said I, 'whether in what I did I went beyond the duty of a wife. You, too, Mr. Lundy,' said I, turning to him, 'shall tell me what you think, considering all the circumstances.'

It was a question that perhaps was overbold ; and it was my fear of Lundy, more than any other thing, that drove me to put it. I was moved to know how I stood with him, were it the worst ; for 'tis a thing I cannot abide, a half-seen danger. To my surprise, he came very frankly off, with a great laugh, like one that looked upon what was past but as a game wherein we had bested him.

'Indeed, madam,' said he, 'I think there's none of us can blame you, unless, as you say,

we are prepared to bid our own wives stand submissive in our time of need—I least of all, though I must say your usage of me was none of the gentlest. But what a man with loaded pistols ready to his hand gets from a gentlewoman with no better weapon than a great mantle, I say he should take without grudging. So if my lord be of my mind, I would even give my voice for letting you go free.'

This speech of Lundy's was no small marvel to me, especially when presently I found myself at liberty to retire. An explanation occurred to me later, whether 'tis the true one or no perhaps it is scarce for me to say, so prejudiced as I ever was against him. But it was simply this: That if, indeed, he had found means to spy upon us, either himself or by means of someone in his pay, and had overheard some or all of our dialogue of the evening before, he was aware that my lord could not intend any punishment to me. He considered, no doubt, that to show rancour against me were useless; and that to take the thing as he had might perhaps lull our suspicions of him to rest, and so give him further opportunities to contrive my lord's downfall, on purpose to rise on his ruin.

The next thing was a searching of the house from garrets to cellars, I think at Lundy's instance; who seemed convinced that the

fugitive was concealed within the walls thereof; though, indeed, we have no secret hiding-place at Cloncally, such as have been often found so useful in times of danger in houses where they exist. While they were a-searching, first one and then another of the soldiers that had smelt out something of the truth, came to me privately and begged leave to wish me luck for a brave and fortunate lady. I say not but I was pleased at the flattery, though still more to know my husband so beloved in the ranks. They presently convinced themselves that, wherever Captain Hamilton was concealed, 'twas out of their power to lay hands on him, and so rid away to Derry; where, no doubt, they had some of the news that I received a very few minutes after their departure. I cannot imagine to this day how they contrived to miss Mr. Browning that brought it; but so by great happiness they did. And ere the sound of their horses' feet had properly died away he was with us, mightily chafed at that whereof I was so thankful—that he had been absent from my side at the time of the inquiry. 'Twas nothing less than a providence of God, I told him, and Rosa, that had kept out of sight all the morning, backed me up in it. And then immediately we desired his news, which he was nothing loath to let us have.

This said news was so good, and so like my husband's daring, that more than once (notwithstanding the heavy reason I had for sadness) I could not choose but laugh aloud. For do but think of this man, supposed to be flying for his life—what must he do, forsooth, but to ride straight to Derry, and therein to his quarters; where he first set to work to look over his papers, some of which he burnt; and some that he judged it well to preserve he tied into a parcel, and gave to Mr. Browning to be delivered into my hands. After that, what does he next but to get up his orderly servant, one of the trusty men of whom he had told me, and send him for the others, of whom he had said they were too good to be lost sight of; to them he gave tokens and countersigns, the same as he had given to me, telling them, in case they should be discharged, to present themselves at Cloncally, where employment should be found for them. Next he sends for Gustavus Hamilton, the Major, and one or two more of his brother officers that were in quarters, and gives them an account of the whole quarrel between my Lord Mountjoy and himself from the time he had virtually resigned his commission to my lord, before he rid away to Dublin, begging them of their friendship to have a care of his reputation while 'twas im-

possible for him to defend it himself. To which end, if they saw fit to draw up a paper stating the case, he said he would be always to be heard of either at Comber or at Moira, where if they sent it to the charge of my Lord Massareene or Sir Arthur, he would set his hand to it and send it back.

Heard one ever before of a runaway that left his address behind him? or of one that in the very moment of escape thought less of safety to his life than of safety to his honour? Having put his affairs into the order he desired, he rid, as Mr. Browning told us, near the dawning of day, as calmly and quietly out of Derry as though he were an envoy sent upon an honourable errand, rather than a fugitive fleeing from a halter. I myself might call his conduct rashness and foolhardiness; but if Rosa or her brother had named it anything less than gallantry, sure they had found me less than friendly to reckon with.

Gallantry it was, in very truth, and of the very sort that is most precious on the battlefield—in the assault or in the defence of any fortress—in any and every forlorn hope; and that he took no heed of it, more than the most ordinary matter of routine, did that make it less a credit to himself and a glory to his friends? How should a man be aware that he draws his

breath? And this integrity of calmness in the front of danger was as natural to Captain Hamilton as breathing. As, bit by bit, all he had done after leaving Cloncally was described to me, 'twas the very man himself that stood before my thoughts; at every added feature I was made to laugh, and laugh again, till the tears stood in mine eyes, and for all 'twas the laughter brought them, I could not tell whether 'twas pain or mirth that was the cause.

He sent me, through Captain Browning, a score or more of messages—of thanks, of love, of carefulness for my welfare; and, sure, I knew that no words he was master of would carry the half of his meaning. It was even as if he stood within call of me, as I heard and treasured his dear words; but the last message of all set him far away from me once more. For thus it ran:

'As he turned to ride away,' said Mr. Browning, 'I was at his bridle-rein, and he had yet another word to add. "See you fail not to commend me to my wife," said he; "and tell her that I leave all my family at Cloncally in her care, with the utmost confidence in her prudence and foresight."'

I even threw up my hands with a cry at that hearing.

'God be good to them, then,' cried I, 'if I be the best of their stay on earth!' And it was as if till that moment I had never begun to sound my loneliness. For do but think what a plight I was in—and they that were left to my charge. To manage the place I think nothing of now, nor did then; it was not that that was my burden. But to be left to guide, and, as it were, defend the household in so dangerous and troubled times—where a step wrong taken by any one of us might plunge the whole family in ruin, as witness this affair of my husband's—here was a burden for a stronger back, a task beyond my power, conscious as I was of my own weakness both of heart and arm. My discretion and foresight, forsooth! where were they? I knew myself rash where I should be cautious, and yet but timorous to face the consequences of my rashness; ay, and but very short of sight, where the gift of prophecy itself had scarce been too liberal a preparation for the difficulties we might have to face. And no wise head, no bold heart, no strong arm beside me, to fall back upon. Mine own heart and head were true and frank, at least, if not wise and bold, and gave me honest warning by their quaking and trembling of the sort of help I was like to have from them in time of need.

It was true that Mr. Browning had promised me his counsel and assistance; and that had mightily heartened me, save for one thing; to wit, that in the nature of things he could not be long at hand to give it. A sea-captain is tied to his ship, as a soldier to his regiment; when she is ready for sea, to sea he must go, whatever the need for him on shore. How could I tell but that, at the very moment when his support should be most needful to me, this one might be called away out of my reach? Yet even so, there was some small comfort in the thought of his promise.

There was Wamphray, to be sure; my brother, and likely to be no further afield than the Liberties of Derry should I send for him. But in these days the ways of my good brother Wamphray (for all the love we bore one another) were not my ways; nor, though I esteemed him truly, was there that sympathy between us—that understanding that needed no words—that subsisted between Rosa and her brother.

Wamphray's ways were none of mine, nor mine of his; he was too fine-drawn and subtle to be my guide, and I too headstrong and eager (as he said, finding me blameworthy therein) to be his pupil. No; the more I considered the matter and all my circumstances, the

more certain I grew that there was no possibility of shifting the burden of care and charge from mine own shoulders to any other; and God alone, who made my heart, knew how unfit it discerned itself for the load, and how it shrank appalled at the prospect before it.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW ANOTHER AND A LESS WELCOME MESSENGER CAME TO CLONCALLY OUT OF DERRY.

If ever I was taken by surprise in my life—and sure that is a thing that happens to me as oft as to my neighbours—I was so in the afternoon of that very day—the day following Captain Hamilton's escape out of Cloncally. Cargill came into the room where I sat with Rosa and her brother, and let me know that Master Jedediah Hewson, my father's minister, waited below in the vestibule, and desired to see me. Had it been a visit from my Lord Deputy Tyrconnel he came to announce, it had scarce been more unexpected or less welcome, for there is no man in the world that so despises and suspects me as Mr. Hewson doth. For my part, I despise not him, but I am no friend to him; it is he, I do verily think, that hath come between me and my father and brother.

Never was a woman, I think, more parted from her home and her kinsfolk by her marriage than I. All the affairs and interests of my husband and his friends were different from my father's; in some matters they were even opposed, Captain Hamilton belonging both by birth and training to the moderate Royalist party, and my father being an old Commonwealth's man. It therefore is scarce needful to mention that my husband was an Episcopalian in his doctrine, and my father a Puritan of the old school; and what he was to *enthusiasm*, Master Hewson was to fanaticism. It hath ever been a matter of great wonder to me how my marriage to Captain Hamilton came to pass; sure, that was *made in heaven*, as they say, contrived and brought about alike by powers that could not be withstood. 'Twas no more unlikely that a Cavalier should fix his fancy on a Roundhead maiden than that a Puritan of the Puritans should give his consent to his daughter's marriage with a Malignant; yet both miracles happened. I think in no long time my father began to be of opinion that, in giving his consent thereto, he had acted rashly and wrongly. Mr. Hewson's view appeared to me to be that, in so doing, Mr. Murray had committed the unpardonable sin; unless, indeed, the unpardonable sin was mine own, in changing

to my husband's creed and Church from that wherein I had been born and brought up ; which I need not say was of the straitest sect of the Pharisees. There ! 'tis written. I have thought it very often, but I never dared before to put it into words ; but, indeed, I had come to the conclusion, years before my marriage, that in their zeal for the pureness of doctrine and discipline my father and his friends were like the Pharisees of old, in that they turned aside from the substance of religion to embrace the shadow thereof.

To mistrust every impulse of our nature, lest it lead into a snare—to be ever on the outlook for things to be forbidden and thwarted, so to gain the favour of God that made them pleasant —to make it the object of our chief endeavours to avoid giving Him cause for anger—is this religion ? Which religion they yet tell us is no slave's yoke of bondage, but a dear tie and support. To have filled this world with things beautiful and delightful, which yet to enjoy is to transgress His law—to have created us full of impulses and appetites, which yet we satisfy at the peril of our souls—is this benevolence ? Is this worthy of our reverence ? Is this worthy of our hearts' adoration ? And yet they teach us that this is the attitude of our God towards His creatures, adding to that that He is a

God of love—nay, that He *is* Love—Love in essence. It is, and ever hath been, a thing wonderful to me, how men can so wrest their conscience as to believe so flat a contradiction.

How anxiously I myself strove to believe it —with what daily pain, with what strong crying and tears, I fought the battle of Reverence for Right against Reverence for Belief, striving to convince my heart, wiser than my head, that this was the right Divine goodness, and that 'twas only mine own natural depravity that rebelled at thinking it so—none knows save God, and He, I hope, hath forgiven me. For, sure, it is a sort of blasphemy to try to wrest that conscience which Himself hath made our guide (in belief as well as in conduct) against its own light.

No one, even among the Puritans, can call Captain Hamilton lax either in principle or in practice ; but his view of these matters is other than this, and bears less hard upon the spirits. There may well be a truth in that wherewith my father taunted me when we had so grievous a difference concerning my going with Captain Hamilton to Church ; and that, the yoke being of a sudden lightened, I stood in danger of throwing it off entirely. And yet I know not.

To follow the good is more comfortable than to flee the evil, and hath more of encouragement; but I know not that 'tis any easier. I think it is the contrary. I myself find it an easier matter to deny myself in ten sins than to attain to one virtue; but for all that, the one is the child's duty and the other the slave's task.

I never have doubted, since I had a child of my own, which way of looking at this was the more Divine. 'Like as a father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord merciful to them that fear Him'—'twas the Psalm for the day when Roland was christened. And then, how it goes, 'For He knoweth whereof we are made; He remembereth that we are but dust.' If this be true—as who can doubt it, being the words of His own Scripture?—then 'tis not so much the giving offence to Him that we should dread, as the falling short of any nearness to Him whereto we might, being helped of Him, hope to attain. 'Look also,' saith the Psalm, 'how far the east is from the west; so far hath He set our sins from us.' 'How fair a prospect! How gracious a removal!' quoth my own heart to itself. 'And yet how consonant to what we know!' For if, in one view of it, they be as far asunder as the poles of heaven, yet in another it is but as the turning of the face from east to

west, from the doing of our own will to the following of His. A step by step progress, no doubt, as befits our dust ; but yet, being turned by His mercy in the right direction, a progress wherein every faltering step leads through brightening light to the perfect day.

'Tis but the shield reversed, according to the fable ; but, sure, 'tis an unimaginable gain to have passed from the side of iron to the side of gold ; and I came out of Church a freed woman from barriers that had oppressed me all my life. Then, lest through mine own diffidence I should fail to grasp the liberty that was set within my reach, I did forthwith the thing I had long been pondering, and severed myself altogether from my father's communion, and by the same stroke from his affection and from mine old home. He despised my opinions—what he knew of them—as wanting in strength, which to him hath always seemed to include sternness ; me also he despised as an apostate from the faith of my girlhood, which, as I have been explaining, I was not.

I, on my part, was debarred from resenting an attitude of mind that I had foreseen, though it grieved me ; I could even, strange as it seemed, understand it, and find somewhat in it to reverence. But I understood it best, and had most toleration for it, when my father and

I were apart, and consequently was disposed to acquiesce in his manifest desire that we should not often meet. For Wamphray and Rosa, something to my wonder, no restraint was laid upon their intercourse with us, and this was an immense solace and satisfaction to me. For Mr. Hewson, he avoided me in the most pointed manner, taking pains in the family to show (as I gathered from a word let drop by Rosa now and then) that if to Mr. Murray I was despicable, to him I was absolute anathema. Wherefore I could not choose but marvel when, on the day after Captain Hamilton's escape, he came into my room, sat him down at my side, and held out to me once more, as it were, the right hand of fellowship. Me he greeted with something of distance in his manner; Rosa, if one may be permitted an expression so paradoxical, with a sort of austere warmth; to Mr. Browning his manner was dubious, as that of one who holds his judgment in suspense. He answered our questions concerning Mr. Murray's health and Wamphray's with that preciseness that is his characteristic, as though it were a matter of conscience to leave out no detail; and then fell to asking questions of his own about Captain Hamilton's escape; whereof Wamphray had had word early in the day, mixed with many new circumstances and enlargements that had no

counterpart in the actual truth of what had passed; which I told him, he listening with rapt attention.

'Frail human nature,' he said, when I had finished my story, helped out now and then by the others—'frail human nature would say that this was well done of you; but frail human nature is ever too much disposed to give the glory to the mortal instrument rather than where the praise is really due. I trust, Mrs. Hamilton, that you have not so far forgot your early training as to take the glory to yourself; you were but the tool in the hand of Almighty Power, to whom 'tis as easy to discomfit a thousand as half a dozen.'

Now, this was the very first time that anyone had expressed to me a feeling anything like mine own, respecting the occurrences of the night before. How could I, remembering my tremors, my weakness, my first plans that I thought so feasible so ignominiously frustrated; and then the second, that scarce were mine at all in any real sense, brought beyond all reasonable expectation to succeed—how could I, remembering all these things, doubt for a moment that what he said was the pure truth, and that I deserved no praise for the escape, but Almighty Providence alone? Also this was, to the best of my remembrance, the first time

that Master Hewson had said anything to me—at least, since I began in any measure to think for myself—to which I could assent heartily and without reservation. So I answered him to his wish, agreeing that what he said was no more than truth, and disclaiming any credit or praise for myself for the occurrences of the night.

He looked surprised.

'Tis but rarely, Mrs. Hamilton,' said he, 'if report speak truly of you, that you now show a disposition so gracious. But I am come neither to praise you nor to blame you, but am simply the bearer of a message to you from your father.'

'I am ready to hear you,' said I, thinking in myself that I was pretty well aware of what the message was like to be.

Whereupon he began to *expound* my father's mind to me. No word less important will convey an idea of his manner of discharging his errand. He did all but to give out a text for his homily; and even without that aid to serious exposition, he went very nigh to dividing it into heads. As, for example:

Firstly, that the country was in a troublous state; and no longer fit for safe and quiet dwelling whereon he enlarged at some length.

Secondly, that we were far from English

neighbours, and were therefore in a more dangerous state than those that had such.

Thirdly, that we had no longer a man at the head of the household, but a frail, weak, foolish woman ('tis the very fact that he spared not to characterize me as such to my face), and that therefore our dangers were multiplied by ten.

Fourthly, that, there being none to come to our aid in any emergency, 'twould be our wisdom to go where emergencies were less likely to arise.

Fifthly, that such a place was Derry; and such a place, we being got to Derry, was my father's house therein.

And then followed the application: that it was my father's conclusion, arrived at after much and painful thought over my matters, that I should forthwith betake myself to this place of refuge, that very day if I could, or the next at the latest; riding daily, if I pleased, to Cloncally, till all my goods should be bestowed in safe keeping, and the house so far dismantled as I should think fit.

'Such reasonable liberty,' he continued, clearing his throat as if for his peroration, 'as a married woman may think her right, worthy Master James Murray hath empowered me to promise you; he, on his part, looking for such compliance and obedience as a father hath a

right to from a daughter of any age or condition.'

'Twas as tempting an offer, to my mood, as could well have been made me. To leave behind me the care I shrank from; to provide duly for the safe keeping of my husband's property, and yet to have the burden of the charge of it taken off my back—it was what I could have wished, had wishing been having, that day. And even the condition that I should render obedience to my father, to his own interpretation of what was his due, seemed a thing not too hard to promise, a price not too dear for so many and great benefits. I looked to Mr. Browning, if, perhaps, I might discern some inkling of his mind anent the offer; but he had turned his eyes away. And this set me meditating; for, indeed, I was not so dull, nor so besotted with the wish to be free from my responsibility, as to have failed to see, even while Master Hewson was speaking, where the difficulty lay.

It was, of course, that Captain Hamilton had never contemplated my leaving the place, and that we knew not his mind upon it. Clearly, he thought it not too difficult a charge for me, nor too dangerous a dwelling, since he had directed me to receive men from his company, should they come to me, and to find them

employment about the place. 'Twas evident that he looked I should remain upon the place to do his will.

His property—if he thought it in my charge, had I any right to shift the care of it to other shoulders? I could send a message to him, it was true, and then and there I resolved to do it, and upon my fear lest it should fail to come safe to his hand, was all of a sudden enlightened as to what folly it were to quit the house without both sending it and hearing his reply. For put the case that it missed him, and that he should hear unprepared that Cloncally was dismantled and deserted, might he not suppose that I had suffered for my action in his escape, and be goaded on to do some desperate thing that might damage his cause past mending?

'Master Hewson,' said I, having come to my conclusion, 'I were a happy woman could I think it right to accept my father's offer as freely as he makes it. But this that he hath counselled is too great a change to venture upon all at once, without careful thought and consideration; and besides that, I should think that I acted ill by Captain Hamilton to leave his house without his knowledge and permission. It would lift a load from my mind could I even give you a promise; but that also is impossible

until I hear from my husband, and who can say when that may be ?'

'May a man so far presume as to crave of you some reason for so whimsical a conclusion ?' demanded Master Hewson, in his old tone of sarcasm.

I had all but forgot it, but at the first sound of it a hundred scenes of strife between us rose into my mind—scenes wherein I had ever and always been worsted. Even then it shook for one moment my faith in mine own judgment, and had perhaps shaken it yet more rudely, had not Mr. Browning lifted his eyes, first on Mr. Hewson and then on me. As I met them I knew that I had answered to his mind, and thereupon felt that I had answered right. I plucked up a spirit, therefore, and told him one by one the reasons I have written down above, which I even looked should convince him. Nothing of the kind ; he rebuked me sternly.

''Tis ever your habit, madam,' said he, 'to *think*, as you term it, *for yourself*, instead of being guided by an older and far wiser head than your own ; and that head your father's, too, whose wishes you are bound to reverence, for as great as you think yourself. But she that dares to show such a temper in matters spiritual, how should we look for other manners from her in matters temporal ? That you find

no cause to repent your contumacy in this case is what I shall endeavour to wish for you rather than hope or expect. Come, Mrs. Murray; your good husband and the rest will be looking for us long ere we can get back to Derry. Shall we go?'

'Nay, but under your favour, sir,' said Mr. Browning, 'it seems to me that you are something over-severe on Mrs. Hamilton. 'Tis no longer to her father's wish, but to her husband's, that she owes her first obedience; and taking into the count all she hath urged, as well as a word or two he let drop last night, I think she hath decided wisely——'

'Hath he made you his spokesman, sir?' asked Mr. Hewson, looking upon Captain Browning very sternly.

'I might retort the question,' said Mr. Browning, 'were it civil to bandy words in a lady's presence. But, sir, I rather choose to answer it, and you shall understand that if he have not gone so far as to give me authority to speak for him, he hath at least desired me to counsel Mrs. Hamilton when she asks it; and, sir, if she had asked me to counsel her in this business, I must tell you plainly that I would have advised her to give you the answer she hath done.'

'Well, sir,' said Mr. Hewson, 'you are very

bold thus to support an undutiful daughter in her rebellion; 'tis hardly, give me leave to tell you, the conduct I expected from your sister's brother.'

Mr. Browning bowed, as one who should say: 'We have been over this ground before; why need we retrace our steps?' Then he spoke:

'Give us but a little time, Master Hewson; there can be no question but the city is safer dwelling in these troubles than the country; I have scarce any doubt but that Captain Hamilton, when we can hear from him, will wish his wife to establish herself in security within its wall. But I own I think that were she to leave this house with the haste you counsel, she would show small consideration or respect to him, and that for the reasons she stated herself. Why, sir, think but of it. Were her message to miss him, or be delayed —as who could warrant it would not?—what were his feelings were he to venture here in ignorance of her departure? 'Tis we, I think, who must wonder if you be serious in your recommendation of a course so hasty and so unseemly.'

'Twas all against my desire, as I said, but according to my mind; and Mr. Hewson had nothing to urge against it, and so held his

peace. It must have gone sorely against the grain with him to be so silenced.

Presently he rose to take his leave.

'Mrs. Murray,' said he, ''tis more than time we were on our way. May I pray you will be speedy in your preparations?'

'Nay,' I broke in. 'Mr. Hewson, my sister leaves me not to-night.'

'Her husband expects her, madam,' said he. 'Since you lay such stress on the cogency of a husband's wishes, you will scarce put your will in competition with that.'

'Nay, but under your favour, sir,' said Mr. Browning, with a twinkle of a smile. 'I am grieved to appear to go counter to you, but Rosa is not fit to travel to-day; my good brother is in ignorance of her illness of last night, else I am sure he had never desired her to ride. I will myself conduct her to Derry to-morrow, and that in better time; 'tis too late now for women and children to be out of doors.'

Mr. Hewson's lips opened to reply to this—no doubt by way of protest, for the man hath a most absolute belief in the infallibility of his own judgment—but at the moment the door of the room was opened from without, interrupting us. He turned, and we all looked to see who was about to enter.

Two children, Rosa's son and mine own, stood in the doorway, with Margery behind them. It can scarce be a mother's partiality, I think, else my memory and my present judgment are alike at fault; but a lovelier picture than was formed by the pair mine eyes have never beheld. Nearly of an age, and exactly of a height, they were in respect of feature, complexion, and expression a perfect contrast. James, Rosa's boy, was slim for his height, and though he hath something of his mother's exquisite tint, 'tis evident that by-and-by he will be dark; he hath brown eyes, and his hair, though still golden fair, hath dark shadows. He hath at times, and had that day remarkably, a look of great depth and rapture in his beautiful wide-opened eyes; 'tis the look of a little angel that hath been charged with a message from heavens—as yet he lacks the words to declare the same, and so can do no more than to look it. My Roland is in every point the opposite of his cousin; as lusty a child as ever I set eyes on, he hath his father's sunny hair and blue laughing eyes. He seems the very embodiment of earth at its best, as the other hath borrowed some of his beauty from heaven.

They stood for a moment hand-in-hand in the doorway, and then each child ran to

his mother. How the mothers responded to their advance 'tis sure scarce needful for me to set down.

There was one regarding us, however, that had little sympathy with us. Master Hewson knows nothing of the feelings of a parent, and he hath no liking for children; their ways, I should judge, have too much of Nature and of life to be pleasing to one whose opinion of Nature is that she is the mother of corruption, and of life that it hath been bestowed upon us chiefly in order to be repressed and thwarted. He looked for a moment in grave disapproval, first at the one of us and then at the other; then he spoke to Rosa.

'For shame, Mrs. Murray,' said he sternly, 'that you will fondle your child thus foolishly; 'tis not thus that you entreat him in your husband's house. How shall he be disciplined and taught obedience if you thus teach him to know himself your idol? You put me much in doubt of you in other respects, Mrs. Murray; for the mother that will thus kiss her child openly on a week-day may well be suspected of kissing him secretly on the Sabbath.'

I looked not to see how Rosa received this rebuke; for myself, I clasped my boy the closer in mine arms.

'Ah, but, Mr. Hewson,' said I, 'it is God

Himself that hath filled the hearts of mothers with love to their children; and, sure, of all His gifts to His creatures, 'tis the dearest and the best.'

'Like all His other gifts, madam,' said he sharply, 'it is capable of being carried to excess, and then it is no better than any other excess. God hath given you hunger, but He means not that you should eat to gluttony; and thirst, but it is sin to drink to drunkenness. Love of children! Yes, truly, in strict moderation 'tis a good thing enough; but when indulged out of measure, as with you, 'tis a temptation and a snare.'

'Sir,' said Mr. Browning, 'had you been a father no doubt but you had learned to make another estimate of a parent's love. 'Tis never he that hath his child's welfare at heart that will be so ill a friend to him as to spoil him, but the very reverse.'

'You will scarce dispute, sir,' said Mr. Hewson, girding up his loins, as it were, to the battle (sure a battle of words is a greater matter to him than any battle of blows)—'you will scarce dispute that indulgence beyond what is meet in any carnal passion is a danger to the immortal part of man. Love of children, gild it how you will, is but a carnal passion when all's said; the very brutes possess it, and exhibit

it in no small measure. Would you desire to see your sister and your friend lower themselves by their folly and fondness to the level of the brutes that perish ?'

'Why, sir, I will be bold enough,' said Mr. Browning, 'to crave your pardon beforehand, if I be plain with you to very roundness, and so will take the freedom to say that I think you meddle here with matters that are beyond your sphere. 'Tis God Himself, as Mrs. Hamilton truly says, that hath put into the hearts of mothers everywhere the great love they bear to their offspring; and, truly, I would not think so meanly of His goodness as to suppose He hath done it for a snare to them. 'Tis a great light and a mighty strength to them in the hard and noble task of training the young souls; and though 'tis true, no doubt, that 'tis given in some sort to the brutes, that were rather, in my judgment, ennobling to the brutes than degrading to the emotion.'

'This is all mighty specious, Mr. Browning,' said Mr. Hewson; 'and were you of my cloth I would not stick to answer you. But can you doubt, sir, that the contact of everyday matters hath a blunting effect upon the mind, blinding it to the finer issues of thought? As a minister, I claim my right to guide my flock, being specially set apart by mine office to think for

them in those matters wherein they can scarce look to be able to think for themselves.'

'To think for them, perhaps, Master Hewson,' said Rosa, suddenly plucking up a spirit and a voice, her son upon her lap being her inspiration, I doubt not—'to think for them, and perhaps even to guide them, but scarce to lead them in bonds. No minister, were he the wisest that ever drew breath, can dispense them from the rule of their own conscience; 'tis that that must be their guide, blaming or acquitting.'

'What, Mrs. Murray, you too!' said he, astonished as though a lamb had turned to withstand him—'you too! 'Tis past belief, the corrupting influence of evil example, even on one so gracious. For sure am I that you had not dared to answer me thus in your husband's house; no, nor will not, when I make this the subject of an evening's exhortation, as I shall very soon.'

He rose to his feet.

'I must be going,' said he; I had bidden him to stay for our supper, but he disregarded mine invitation altogether, answering me not by so much as a single word or a sign. 'Be you sure of this, gentlewomen both,' said he by way of farewell, 'that he that indulges himself in idolatry heaps up retribution to his own soul;

an idol is a sure rod in the hand of an avenging God.' And so left us, without a word of salutation.

Captain Browning, as my representative, followed him from the room, leaving Rosa and me by ourselves with the children.

CHAPTER X.

Ô SANCTÂ SIMPLICITAS!

SCARCE had they left us, when Rosa put her son from her lap.

So did not I, being wroth in my heart with Mr. Hewson for his presumption in rating us like two froward children. What had he to do, I wondered, to settle for us when and how often we might kiss our children, he who had none? Without meaning it, he had effectually undone his errand; mine appetite for my father's protection was all gone, now that I remembered what it would be to accept along with it the sauce of his minister's admonitions. Even before my marriage, when these were familiar to me as my daily tasks, they were distasteful to me; now disuse had made them altogether offensive and unendurable.

Presently the little James began to clamour to Rosa to be taken up again upon her knee. The mother in her could not resist his caresses.

She took him again, and bent her head over his shining curls, and I could see that a tear dropped upon them.

'What, Rosa!' I exclaimed. 'In tears? You would never attach so much importance to anything Mr. Hewson might say?'

'Why not?' she answered, veering round upon a sudden from the view she had held but a minute ago to side with him. 'Is he not a good and holy man? Is it not true what he said, that he is one set apart by his very calling to decide upon the lawfulness or sinfulness of what we do?'

'Having renounced the Pope,' said I flippantly, 'I'd scarce acknowledge the right of any other man to do so much.'

'Mary!' said she in a tone of reproof, and paused. 'But oh, Mary!' she continued the next minute, 'whether he have the right or no, you know he claims it. And is it a little thing to be made the subject of his exhortations before the whole family; to be held up to reprobation, as it were, until for very peace' sake I submit, whether I be convinced or no?'

'A small thing, forsooth!' said I in a sudden heat of indignation, so keenly did this her fear recall to me Mr. Hewson's dealings with myself in former years. 'No, indeed, it is not to be borne! I wonder that you will so much as

think of enduring such insolence from any man, were he a minister ten times over. Complain to Wamphray; ask him to protect you from it.'

'My dear Mary,' said she, smiling, as one might figure it, through rain, 'you have certainly forgotten what Mr. Hewson's position is in your father's house. Complain to Wamphray indeed! What do you think he'd do if I did? Interfere with the minister's authority and in my behalf? He were far more like to support him against me. And if they were to fall out, 'tis Wamphray, I do verily think, that would have to shift his quarters, not he.' She paused again, and then again continued, her voice breaking and changing so that I pitied her for all she angered me. 'But when all's said,' said she, 'tis being convinced I dread more than being coerced. I care less that he should impose his will on my obedience than his opinion on my conscience.'

'I wonder to hear you, Rosa!' said I, a little vexed with her for her tenderness. 'Is this fit language for a woman that is a Protestant?'

Captain Browning returned at the moment, and I appealed to him.

'Come here,' I said to him, 'and listen to a tale of a Protestant director as absolute as ever was Catholic priest since the beginning of the world. Here is Master Hewson at the head of

the spiritual affairs of my father's house. Here is Rosa more than half ready to submit to him, even in a matter wherein her judgment accords not with his; partly for peace' sake and partly for fear of his tongue, which is as bad as the pillory. Her husband, so she says, is more likely to support him than her should she be driven to resist. Whatsoever he says, they all agree to; what he permits, they allow themselves in; what he disapproves, they regard as a thing unlawful, and even accursed if the disapproval be emphatic.'

''Tis a highly-coloured picture,' said Mr. Browning, smiling.

''Tis done from the life, I assure you,' I rejoined. 'Ask Rosa else, though she be but a half-hearted witness, being much inclined to admit his right to all that I say.'

'Surely,' said she, ''tis at least half admitted in the man's mere office. What is the use of ordaining a man a minister if he be not——'

'To rule instead of to serve?' I finished for her as she paused, clean forgetting my manners in the heat of the discussion.

'There can sure be little question of the unlawfulness of such a claim,' said Captain Browning; 'though I marvel less that it should be allowed than that men should set it up.'

'Less!' said I, astonished.

'Yes, truly,' said he, with a twinkle far back in his eye, but yet, methought, with something as keen as mine own feeling deeper yet than that. 'Submission to such a claim,' said he, 'is easily understood, when you remember the difficulty your ordinary man hath in coming to any conclusion whatever outside his own ordinary affairs of every day. I feel it myself whenever I am met by a spiritual issue. He that would save me the pain of decision were a friend indeed! I am but a plain sailor; sure, questions in casuistry are out of my sphere, to say nothing of the further embarrassment that, when with labour of mind I have arrived at an opinion, 'tis great odds but my nearest neighbour may be ready to come to blows with me to compel me to alter it. See what pains we be saved, and what heart-burnings into the bargain, if we both agree to be led by some other man—say, for argument's sake, by our minister.'

I laughed.

'You may be plagued with such an infirmity of decision as you describe,' said I, thinking the contrary of him while I said it. 'But I am very certain that my father hath no difficulty of the sort.' At that both he and Rosa fell to laughing also. 'And yet,' I continued, 'of all Mr. Hewson's followers, he is the heartiest and the most undoubting.'

'Tis the exact contrary with him,' said Mr. Browning, still laughing. 'But extremes meet, as they tell us; and the result is the same. His opinions are so strong that he thinks them certainties; Mr. Hewson's agree with his in every point. Now, 'tis an indisputable fact that when a man tells me the thing I am sure of, I am sure he is telling me the thing that is true. Mr. Murray, therefore—it follows of course!—hearing Mr. Hewson say always the thing that he himself is sure of, is sure that he says always the absolute truth; and he that says always the absolute truth, wherein falls he short of infallibility? 'Tis a demonstration—and the application is that he is one to be followed without swerving or doubting. With your father, belief in Mr. Hewson hath come to so great a height that I think, were they to disagree—to be sure, it is a thing most unlikely—but were it to happen, I think—I do verily think—that Mr. Murray might go so far as to consider whether he might not himself be in the wrong.'

I laughed again.

'Nay,' said I; 'if Mr. Hewson can do miracles, we may as well submit to him at once and have done with it.'

'This is all very well, and very amusing,' said Rosa, with her brother's sparkling of the eye, but like him, as I thought, with a ground

of serious interest beneath the light surface. Her arms were close around her son, who had fallen asleep upon her lap. 'You show much subtlety in your apprehension of the relations between Mr. Murray and his minister, whom yet you will not go so far as to call his spiritual guide; and yet it is a fact that I have seen Mr. Hewson in the very mood of an oracle, as mysterious and as imperative! But it sets me a-marvelling that my brother, who hath but just ended his confession, wherein he professed himself so conscious of his liability to error, should forthwith fall a-quarrelling with one that desires to assume that same good office towards him, of guide and director. Sure, what would you have?'

'My guide by force? 'tis little argument of his fitness for the post,' said Mr. Browning, with a change of tone that was both sudden and striking. 'You ask what I would have? —faith, I would have him that aspires to so delicate an office show at least some small sense of his share in that same weakness. Is he not human like myself, and as apt to err? sure, he shows it most broadly, to my thinking, in that very article of his claim to rule the consciences of others, his equals. Advice, to the best of his faulty human judgment, he might offer with modesty, and I might accept it with gratitude,

if mine own endorsed it. But how far unlike this is Mr. Hewson's attitude towards you!'

''Tis at the least excusable,' said Rosa, 'that he should desire to have me go by his matured opinion, rather than by mine own careless impressions. He pushes it too far, it is true, but the meaning is good.'

'No doubt,' said Mr. Browning, 'had he one touch of humility to temper his imperiousness. But now, Rosa—waverer that you are; for I thought you gave Mr. Hewson a very good answer, and one that he deserved—but tell me this: what is to hinder you from having an opinion of your own as matured as his, and as much to be trusted, instead of those careless impressions that you speak of?'

'Ah!' said Rosa, with a quick glance at the sleeping child in her arms, ''tis the deceitfulness of riches, past question. My darling!' said she, stooping to touch his forehead with her lips. 'Your question is only too easy to answer, brother,' said she, looking up at him where he stood. 'More shame for me!'

Waverer she was as she spoke; for there was that in her face that went to and fro between tears and laughter; but however tempered by the laughter, it was the tears that came from the deeper source. Her brother looked at her with much the same face as she at her son.

'Rosa,' said he very softly, 'I begin to think that 'twas because you feared to be convinced by Mr. Hewson that you took courage to contradict him.'

'It was so, exactly,' said she, with a covert half-smile to me. For this was the very thing she had confessed to me before he entered the room. 'Twas a strange trick of these two, and one I often noticed, to think, as it were, each other's thoughts, and speak each other's words unwittingly.

He stood for a minute silent and pondering. Then he spoke, with a more weighty earnestness than ever I heard from any other lips.

'I would not emulate his arrogance,' said he, 'nor presume to tell you your duty, for all I be your brother and was once your guardian. But, Rosa, were I in your place, I would be beforehand with him, and have my mind made up before he hath the chance to determine it. You told him very truly that it was not in his power to dispense you from obedience to your own conscience. But if it is your own conscience you must obey, then certainly it is your own conscience, undisguised by any man's gloss, that you must listen to.'

'But what if I mistake its orders?' asked she.

'Then I ask you again,' said he—'tis the old question that we can never get away from

—who may not? Is he more assured from error than yourself? You will grant me that he is not; but I go further—much further—than that: I hold that even if you do mistake its orders—nay, even if your conscience be itself in error—it is yet your duty to be guided thereby, and to bring all other guidance to its test before you yield to it.'

'A paradox,' said I, thinking within myself that it was a paradox savouring mightily of Anabaptistry.

'A paradox, no doubt,' he replied to me, 'but a verity none the less.'

'Scarcely, I think,' said Rosa, 'for see where it would lead you: the most wicked actions—you could not condemn them if you believed them to spring from a true sense of duty.'

'Could I not?' said he. 'I said not so, I am sure.'

'Why,' said I, 'even those actions of the King's, that you hold so evil that they are our justification for renouncing him—those actions that we all combine to denounce—upon your own showing you cannot condemn him for them.'

'I cannot, nor I do not,' said he, with a half-smile at my vehemence. 'If his conscience did verily require them of him, he had no choice but to obey. But it is not forbidden, that I can see, to put the question: Whether a man with

a conscience so at variance from the consciences of the great majority of his subjects can be fit to bear rule over them. Him, if I hold him governed by a pure wish to do the right, I cannot condemn; but 'tis by what he does that I must gauge the rightness of his apprehension thereof, and I hold him one whose conscience hath directed him amiss—far amiss—as a compass might point to the south instead of to the north. His actions carry their own condemnation, as I think; for he that is so bent as the King on his right to choose his own Church, how can he refuse the same to his subjects? He is self-convicted in that article, had he but the eyes to see it. But yet I believe him truly desirous to do the thing he deems his duty, and 'tis partly for this reason that I would fain refer the matter to the arbitrament of Heaven, the ancient wager of battle.' He paused. 'And therein,' he ended gravely, 'may God defend the right.'

'Amen,' said Rosa.

'And amen,' said I. 'Though I say "Amen,"' I added the next moment, 'with a certain reservation—to wit, that the right be on our side.'

'It is even but too natural,' he admitted ruefully. 'But I would fain say it without reference to mine own believing; and if it be

otherwise with me, then God amend my meaning.'

He was become mighty grave as he spoke these words. We fell quickly into his mood.

'I fear,' I told him, 'that I cannot follow you in all you say; I think you go too far—I mean with reference to the duty of being led by our own private consciences, and by these alone.'

'I fear I can,' said Rosa at my side. 'I'd rather close mine eyes to it, for all that; 'tis a privilege I have little liking to, that same of independence.'

'The voice of God,' I said, pursuing mine own thought—'conscience, that is the voice of God speaking in our hearts, can never, sure, lead us so far astray as the King hath gone!'

'I nothing doubt but it is the voice of God,' said Mr. Browning. 'But speaking, as you say, in our hearts, it hath but poor interpreters, misleading as harbour-lights seen through a shifting fog; and yet, where else is any light or any hope? Lady,' said he to me, 'you have not had your ship to bring to port, through the storms and mists of the channel, as I have, else had you learnt both to know your judgment for as faulty as it is, and to trust it in spite of its faultiness. What are you smiling at?'—to Rosa.

'I was but wondering,' said she very slyly, 'if the whole race of pilots had become extinct.'

If he smiled at her sauciness—which had yet its core of earnest—it diverted him no whit from the matter in hand.

'For once that they can steer you, each in his own narrow channel,' said he, 'there are a thousand times where you must steer yourself —ay, and with none to help you should you fall upon destruction. I must beg pardon for my presuming,' said he to me, 'for, sure, 'tis nothing less in a man like me, plain to very rudeness, to attempt to handle so great subjects. But to say the truth, this one of all others doth set me preaching in mine own despite. 'Tis the very pith and marrow of our Protestantism; 'tis the prime gain of all our struggles; this, of freedom from those that stood between our souls and our God. If we lose it—if through diffidence or weakness we let it slip from our grasp—what have we gained that is worth the coil we have kept?'

His eyes had lit up like flames, and glowed with the fire of his vehemence. I found it greatly to my mind to see a man of action thus carried away by a thing so intangible as a thought.

'I am with you in the principle,' I answered him. 'I demur only to the length you carry it. I cannot but think that you push it too far.'

'Madam,' said he, with a voice of conviction,

'it is the principle that lies at the very heart of greatness; in the service of God, no less than in other matters, it shines every way, like a candle in a clear lantern; and there is nothing, I think, too remote to be reached by its rays. Though who,' continued he, with a gesture of self-contempt—'who am I that I should speak of greatness, either in the service of God or of my country? 'Tis set for ever beyond my reach; 'tis almost out of my view. I, the plainest of plain sailors; my ship a mere victualler; my calling truly hath little to do with such matters; 'tis with routine, far more than conscience, that I must concern myself. Were I a fighting sailor even, and in a King's ship, there were a chance of drawing my sword for my country. But as it is——'

''Twere an easy matter, no doubt, to make the change,' said I, 'if you have it so deeply at heart.'

For the man's voice thrilled as he spoke with his eagerness.

'Nay,' said he, 'I can scarce say that I desire it; that is the strange thing. My *conscience*,' said he, 'that I hold it so unquestionably my right and privilege to obey, doth tell me to abide in mine own appointed calling, and to discharge the duty that hath fallen to my lot, trifling though it be. If there be greater

service for me to do, I nothing doubt but it will find me where I am,' said he slowly, and with a half-smile. 'A few more cargoes safely brought to hand—a passenger or a message taken where they be desired—that is the limit of the likelihood. And yet,' he went on, 'I cannot chose but ponder the great subjects; I turn them over and about in my mind, and form mine own conclusions, for all the world as if I were a minister like Mr. Hewson. If it stood with your good liking, now,' said he, 'I would fain tell you a little tale that hath passed through my mind more than once while we have been talking; it is one very pertinent to the subject we have been debating.'

I signified my desire that he would proceed.

'I would wager that I know the story,' said Rosa, smiling.

'You were very forgetful else,' said her brother, 'for many and many's the time you have heard it. 'Tis one I love to repeat, for it hath often been a happy guide to me in my perplexities. 'Tis a story of John Huss, the reformer and martyr,' said he to me, 'a saying of his at his burning. You know, doubtless, the main facts of it.'

'Of his death? Yes,' I said. 'How he was lured from safety upon a safe-conduct, which was basely violated, and burned to death at the

stake for his faith—a holy martyr if ever there was one.'

'A holy martyr, past question,' said Mr. Browning. 'I wonder if you will admit something of the spirit of the martyr in him that was the other actor in the tale? The martyr did.'

'Tell it,' I said, 'and we shall see.'

'It was at his burning,' said Mr. Browning. 'All was ready; he was fastened to the stake, the faggots were piled about him, the soldiers stood around ready to set fire to them. At that moment there appeared, making his way through the crowd, a wretched peasant, lean, ragged, aged, loaded with a great faggot of wood, as great as he could carry, on his back. "Hold," he cried; "let me add this faggot to the pile; I bring it to help to burn the heretic." But when it was placed he was not satisfied. It was not near enough to Huss. He desired, he said, that it should be part of the very wood that should consume him, and that he should see and be sure that it was so. At that the soldiers fell to jeering him for his folly, the crowd to blaming him for his rancour. No one would put forth a hand to help him to place it to his mind. Then Huss spoke to him. "Have I ever done any harm to you or yours," said he, "that you show such bitterness against me?"

"To me or mine? None," said the man. "Then why do you desire so greatly to lend a hand to my burning?" said Huss. "Because you are a heretic," said the peasant—"a heretic accursed and hateful to God, if not to man. He that helps to kill you is doing God service. The wood in our valley is scarce this year and dear; the winter, they tell us, will be a hard one. I am poor and old, and shall dearly miss this faggot that I bring. Therefore I would not have it wasted; I desire that it bear its part in burning a heretic off the face of the earth. So shall my sacrifice be pleasing to God; so may it help to save my soul alive." Then Huss put forth his own hand, and helped the peasant to place the faggot to his wish. "*Ô sanctâ simplicitas,*" said he. "Perhaps this thy faggot may help to save us both." '

The water stood in mine eyes as he ended.

'It was a Christ-like saying,' said I.

'None was ever more so,' said he. 'But the peasant—he that was commended of the martyr—what say you of the spirit he showed?'

'It was the clean contrary of Christ-like,' said I quickly. 'A rancorous spirit and a bitter, nowise admirable to me.'

'And yet the martyr praised it,' said he, and so was silent, to let me consider the marvel. Sure, at the moment I thought it no less.

As I bent my mind to it, there came a woman out of the dusk of the doorway, and stood beside us. It was old Annot Wilson, the gardener's wife. She had come with Margery into the room to fetch away the children, and so had heard something of what had been said.

'Never praise him, sir,' she said to Mr. Browning, with a little visible trepidation in her manner, as of one that knew herself presuming; she is, indeed, a civil woman enough, and hath never forgotten her place that I remember but this once. 'Never heed his martyrdom. Was he ocht mair than a man for that? My certie, he was far astray that would lippen to works for salvation, let alane sic a wark as that, sinfu' an' deevilish baith in the thocht an' in the actin'.'

And with that she dropped her curtsey and was gone with Roland in her arms.

I, as though there needed no more than to show me the image of my narrowness to cure me thereof, felt as though a veil were drawn away from before mine eyes. Annot, poor woman! had no desire but to set the truth before us. She did, I believe; but how differently from her meaning! 'Tis a strange thought this; I have often pondered it since.

'It is true,' I said to Mr. Browning, 'that he

did the best he knew, and that he spared not to make some sacrifice for his faith, such as it was.'

'And that,' he rejoined, 'if it be not the whole of salvation, is at least the beginning of grace. To do the best we know—is it not the first step we take on the Way of Life?'

CHAPTER XI.

HOW THERE CAME NEWS TO CLONCALLY OF THAT WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN A MASSACRE.

Not much of any interest passed in the first fortnight after my husband's escape from Cloncally. Things went on from day to day in their accustomed course ; save, to be sure, that daily and almost hourly there crept into the ordinary rule of the house a greater caution, a more warlike order. 'Twas a natural thing enough, when one comes to think of it, that, having lost our chief defender, we should look more sharply than formerly to the means whereby we might fill his place. Not, truly, that ever Captain Hamilton had much time on his hands to see to the defence of his own house ; but then, had we ever stood in need of his presence for our safety, it had been at the least possible that we might have it. Now, let us need it never so sorely, there was but slender hope of it, therefore it behoved us to cast about for means

whereby we might attain to stand on our own feet, as one might phrase it, and suffice for ourselves.

We were but copying herein the example that had long been set us by most of the other houses of the county, and for that matter, by all I could hear, by most Protestant houses throughout all Ireland. There were none in our neighbourhood, I know, but had done for weeks as we now proceeded to do also. This was nothing less than to turn the house, every evening of our lives, into a fortress—a fortress as strong as we could make it. All doors, both of house and offices, were shut before sundown, and secured as if we meant to stand a siege. The windows were all shuttered and barred from within, and in the shutters of those on the lower stories were loopholes, through which our men might fire on any enemy. In the entrance-hall was placed a stand of arms ready loaded. They caused as much alarm to some of the women—foolish souls!—as ever they were like to do to any enemy. The men were all quartered in the mansion-house itself, and took it in turns to mount guard throughout the night; and, indeed, it brought me nigh to laughter to see how well they played the soldier; for one night, about six of the clock, my brother Wamphray having ridden out from

Derry to visit me, it was wonderful to see the parade that Cargill made of reconnoitring before he would open the door to him; nor would he do it even when he was satisfied as to who our visitor was, except two footmen stood beside him with muskets loaded and levelled, and he himself had his gun laid ready to his hand upon the table.

Wamphray commended them highly for all this diligent wariness, on the ground that 'tis too late to lock the door when the steed is stolen; saying that in the state the country then was, it being impossible to tell friend from foe, he was the truest friend to peace and order that afforded the least temptation to violence or aggression.

Now, there was no one at Cloncally (save perhaps, as I said a minute ago, one or two of the maids) that was given to idle tremors and fears. Cargill had served in his youth, and most of the men in the yard knew the smell of powder, and found it relishing. But though one may be able to look steadfastly on fair fighting, even in prospect (when 'tis far worse than the reality), 'tis quite another matter when it comes to being butchered by a mob of wild savages; and there was never a man of the Protestants in Ulster in those days that dared to say at night, when he laid his head upon his

pillow, that he would open his eyes peacefully on the morrow's light. For there was ill blood between the Ultoghs and the men of Ulster—ill blood and a constant chafing sore. Nor was it altogether between the Irishry and the Englishry; among these latter there was division; and it was greatly a matter of religion whether a man sided with his own countrymen or against them. It will be hard for future generations to believe this, but so it was; even at this day, as I write, there be many among the Catholics that would sooner see their countrymen at the mercy of the Irish than to have things settled as they be.

Never a day passed, in the end of November and the first of December, but some disquieting news came to our ears. 'Twas daily hearing how the Irishry and the low Catholics were gathering together chain-bridles and skeans and half-pikes. The priests kept the same in their houses, for greater safety in the storing and ease in the distributing of them. Our own priest in the village, Father Gorman O'Neill, gave out in one week two score half-pikes and two score chain-bridles, and who but he?—and yet he hath but forty pounds a year to his cure. I had it from a sure source, and could well believe it, besides, from that which had come within mine own knowledge. For when Timothy the

groom took my jennet to be shod, O'Shane, the blacksmith, told him very coolly that he must wait his leisure; 'for,' said he, 'my hands are far too full e'en now to shoe ladies' horses.' A fact that spoke for itself; for what Irishman would have dared to return such answer to his master, had he not looked to have the same presently under his feet, to be trampled upon at his pleasure?

Day by day the rumours grew and the fear increased. 'Twas become an old story, that of the disarming of the Protestants by Tyrconnel's orders; and though it was never obeyed in Ulster to the same degree as I believe it was in the South, yet the mere name of it took, as it were, the backbone out of us; as knowing that there was no help for us in our governors, who should, nevertheless, have been the praise and protection of us well-doers, and the terror of the others who did evil. Clean the contrary were they; and yet I know not but the discouragement of their conduct was a blessing in disguise, as stirring us up to do the best we could for ourselves.

All this time there came out of Derry but two of these true men, and tall of their hands, that Captain Hamilton had given us charge to entertain. The rest, I could but conclude, had marched with their colonel to Dublin; for 'twas

on the 23rd, but a day or two after Captain Hamilton's escape, that the regiment left Derry for that place. I believe I had the very last of the news of them; for about noon on that day there came an orderly spurring in haste into the court, the bearer of my Lord Mountjoy's parting courtesies, and desiring, of his part, to hear that I had not suffered in health from the late excitement; to which I returned such answer as seemed fit. A soldier's wife should have understood how strange a thing it was that the garrison should be withdrawn from a town before the incoming regiment was on the spot to replace them; and it was well enough known that no other regiment had marched into Derry. But I protest I thought nothing of it at the time; nor, among all the old soldiers I had in my employ, nor from any of those that came to see me, did I hear so much as a whisper of its strangeness. Yet now, to look back upon it, it does seem well-nigh as incredible that the thing should have drawn so little notice, as that Richard Talbot, soldier as he was, or once had been, should have done it.

Still, another week passed by quietly enough; nothing befell of any interest, though the threatening rumours came in thicker and thicker. 'Tis ever the way with your great storm, whether in the sky or among ourselves,

to go on threatening and threatening, piling deeper darkness upon that which was dark enough before, till of a sudden they burst upon you with peal upon peal of thunder, and lashing rain, and danger and fear to boot.

And as, in the gathering tempest, there wants not the flying gleam of sunshine to give force, by contrast, to the gloom; so here likewise we had our burst of brightness—a glorious one. Ah, sure! no mere freak of driving cloud, but a true earnest of the sun, steadfast above the storm, and of the shining time that should follow it, its fury being spent.

Mr. Browning was he that brought me the tidings, coming into my presence on one of those days of waiting with a flush on his cheek and a fire in his eye that prepared me for the great news he brought. Sure, I had guessed it before ever he opened his mouth. I knew it was no matter of private import that had so moved this man as to give him the air of a prophet rapt out of himself for the glory of his message. And had not all men's hearts and eyes been turned for months to Holland?

I rose to meet him, and remained standing, out of expectation of some communication that should command my reverence. And, sure enough, I had it.

'Ah, madam, you divine it!' was his greeting to me, nothing else or less.

Aught personal would have been clean out of place in the mouth of such a messenger.

'I divine I know not what,' I answered him; 'but there is "glad tidings of great joy" writ large upon your face to-day.'

'The champion of our cause hath appeared, and hath declared himself,' said he. 'The Prince of Orange hath landed in Torbay—nay, he may be in London by this time, for aught I know; 'twas on the fifth of last month, three weeks ago and more, that he came ashore. 'Tis sure news, and truly, if ever it was the duty of men to rejoice, 'tis ours this day, that see the end of all our troubles.'

'Alas!' I said, shaking my head, 'I doubt there be some of our troubles, at least, to come. King James will struggle hard before he renounces the cherished hope of years; he hath power at his back. There will be fighting. Who knows but the three kingdoms may be in a flame before our deliverance is assured?'

'Suppose they should,' he flashed out upon me. 'In faith, I little doubt but they will. But what man is he that will count the cost when the issue lies plain before him and the end is assured?'

'The end assured?' I repeated. 'How can that be? Alas, sir! the gauntlet once thrown down, who can say which side will come out victorious?'

'Why, that will I,' said he, 'and venture my life upon my prophecy. The King hath another adversary to face this time than any he hath hitherto encountered. Ah, madam! this is no curled and scented darling, like Monmouth, that hath taken our cause in hand; 'tis a man, and a great one. There lives not such another leader; Berwick is a child in arms to him. And as he is, so are his soldiers—or such they grow. Fear, as it hath no place in his heart, so it abides not his presence. The meanest man in his army takes some tincture of his quality, as the loadstone touches all iron with its own temper. I cannot but foresee his triumph, he being such as he is and his cause so righteous. To doubt it were to question the goodness of God, that hath heard the cry of His people and is risen to deliver them.'

How happy was I in his confidence! How near and how sure seemed victory and peace at that moment! Nor yet was his confidence misplaced. Victory we have this day; and Peace, sure it follows hard upon her footsteps. We saw them plain enough, and near, and so

they were: our faith seemed already to be sight; our hope, possession. But betwixt us and them there was a great gulf fixed that we saw not or saw but dimly—a gulf of pain and effort—pain of our own bearing, effort of our own endeavouring. What champion could help us here, or close the gulf to save us? Why, none; Curtius himself could have done us no more good than the most ordinary mortal. Many and many a life was swallowed by that gulf before the first foot was set in safety upon the other brink. Even had we known all that lay before us, I believe we had rejoiced more than we had feared at the first hearing of news so comfortable; as it was, being so short of sight, both I and mine went about our daily tasks with hearts that sang in our breasts for joy of a load removed.

This confidence endured for two days, and then came news of a different sort that scattered it all to the winds. It was sent to me in a letter from our good friend and neighbour, Mr. Phillips, of Newtown-Limavady. The letter lies open before me as I write, whereof there is but little need, for in truth it lies as plain in my mind as ever it can to mine eyes; and so, indeed, doth every incident pertaining to that time, down to the smallest and most trifling. It is as though my mind had been branded

with an iron, like the cheek of a malefactor; nor is this the case with the incidents alone; but the reports that came to mine ears, true and false—the very converse that was held respecting them—sounds still in mine ears as I turn my thoughts back upon it—ay, even to the very manner and gesture of the speakers. 'Tis strange to myself, for it was not till long afterwards that I knew the significance of many of the things that are freshest in my memory.

Here is Mr. Phillips' letter, which was brought to me by a mounted servant:

'MADAM,

'I learn from a sure source that the regiment new levied by my lord the Earl of Antrim marches this week to Derry, being commanded there to take the place of my Lord Mountjoy's that were lately withdrawn. You shall understand that this regiment is but a raw rabble, scarce to be called soldiers at all; they are, indeed, no better than "meer Red-shanks," as the country people dub them, and so poorly paid as is a shame to hear of. Moreover, my Lord Antrim himself rides not with them, but is to follow them at a day's interval.

'I send you this news to the end that you may take order for your own safety should they chance to come nigh to your house of Cloncally,

whereof there should be but little fear, were they well-drilled men, you lying so far off from the straight road to Derry. But I doubt they may rove in hope of plunder, being all but desperate men. And you are out of the way of succour should danger happen you. I would gladly send you a man or two of mine if they be needed. Trusting that you will choose the wisest course, whether to go into Derry or to provide a competent strength in your own house, and commending you to the protection of God, I take leave to subscribe myself, madam,

'Your well-wisher and humble servant to
'command,
'GEORGE PHILLIPS.'

Before I had well done reading this letter I was fallen into a brown study, computing how many men I could get together and arm; and tell them how I might, I could make but a dozen of them, counting gardener, grooms and all. This was a slender force, truly, to withstand a regiment should it come my way. But, then, it seemed in the last degree unlikely that it should. As to deserting my house, the thought of it came not into my head, so visionary seemed any real danger from my Lord of Antrim's Red-shanks. For who in his senses would go from Newtown-

Limavady to Derry by way of Cloncally, that is as much as four miles out of the straight road?

The first thing to do was certainly to send a grateful acknowledgment to Mr. Phillips, both of his good counsels and of his offers of help, and that was speedily despatched by his man Tomkyn, the same that had brought his master's letter to me. That done, I began to cast about in my mind what things might be done by way of precaution in the house. The men made so great a pedantry of their watchfulness that there was no possibility of doing more in that direction; but I did begin to foresee that if any of these new-levied men should come in our way, they were like to be more dangerous on account of their hunger and misery than on account of their ill-will to us English. Your hungry man, as Annot Wilson hath it, is ever your angry man. And therefore, more, I protest, to be making some use of Mr. Phillips' well-meant warnings than for any necessity that appeared, I gave orders that a quantity of provision should be prepared and ready dressed, as much as would be a sufficient meal for fifty men. There was little fear of its being wasted, for mine own household was become a large one, counting men and women, and they might be depended on to relish their meat.

Some inkling of Mr. Phillips' warning crept about in the house by means of these orders; and I saw sidelong glances, and heard now and then timid whispers, of which I took no manner of notice. But on the Thursday night of that week the timidity suddenly shot up into a mighty scare, so that it could no longer be overlooked or disregarded. Late at night—as late, I believe, as eleven of the clock—there came a great knocking and calling for admittance at the door which leads into the yard; he that made the outcry proved to be a groom of Mr. Phillips', not his servant Tomkyn, but another man whose name I have forgotten; not that 'tis of any importance to be set down, if I bore it in mind. What I well remember is the face of fright he brought into my presence, along with the letter whereof he was the bearer. I never saw the like; his eyes went to and fro in his head, his breath came thickly in short gasps, like the breath of one that hath been running over-hard for his strength, and even his duty of respect to me could not hinder him from casting fearful glances over his shoulder, as though he looked to see something terrible at his back. I took the letter he carried, marvelling if this were one of the men that Mr. Phillips had sent to help me. A fool-faced fellow I thought him, and more like to be a

charge upon us than any use in helping to defend the house.

The very superscription of the letter showed the haste wherein Mr. Phillips had writ it. Thus it ran :

'MADAM, AND DEAR FRIEND,

'The foremost company of Lord Antrim's regiment is arrived at Newtown, and report hath made them no worse than they are. Raw wild Rapparees of the Irishry, scarce a man of them is able to ask for what he wants in the English tongue. There is besides the company a great rabble of boys and women, as the manner of the Ultoghs is when they intend slaughter. I pray God that their meaning be less than my fear, but truly I like not the looks of them, if the rest of the regiment be no better than this company.

'I am sending an express to Derry with the news, and the man hath orders to go to Cloncally in the first place, to the end you may have time to do what seems fit for your own safety. My counsel would be that you should go into Derry with all convenient speed, to-night if you can do it ; for in truth these are no times, nor Ireland is no country, for a woman to live by herself in a house so far removed from succour as Cloncally is. If this may not be, send me

but a line by any sure hand (but no man that you count on to guard the house), and I will send you some men of mine; they shall leave Newtown so soon as the last of the Red-shanks shall have passed it, and can easily pass them, being mounted, and be with you in time enough.

'And so, dear lady, commending you once more to the protection of God, I remain,

'Your very humble servant to command,

'GEORGE PHILLIPS.'

Now that all these events lie behind me, at one distance off, as one might say—like a picture, wherein all the parts may be seen at once, and the proportions compared—I can see how wise was Mr. Phillips' advice. For our case was exactly as he put it; there was no neighbour near on whom we could count for aid, let our need be never so great. The men in the village were as like to take part against us as with us, though, sure, they have ever had enough kindness shown them by Captain Hamilton and his people to bind them to his fortunes. But when will your Irishman take any part, however righteous, that is discountenanced by his priest?

But as I read the letter, this prudent course seemed to me no better than a cowardly one.

All that had been urged in favour of my continuing at Cloncally at the first, when mine own mind had been to leave it, came back upon me then with tenfold force. Perhaps it was the soldiers' blood that I have in my veins that woke up in me at the moment when 'twas wanted — I know not; but had I fled from Cloncally with that haste that was counselled in Mr. Phillips' letter, I had seemed to myself like the dastard who, for his own poor safety, deserts the post that hath been committed to his charge.

Even as I read the letter, with such thoughts as these flashing to and fro in my mind like the wild-fire over the marsh at night, there came to mine ears such a hubbub, such crying and wailing, as I protest I never heard the like, even in our worst troubles. 'Twas more like the noise that one may hear from the wild Irish, at their wakes or at their feasts, than aught one might expect to hear in the sober family of a gentleman like Captain Hamilton. No grass, as the saying is, had time to grow under my feet, before I was among the silly frantic creatures; sure, I know not if they thought I was struck deaf, so as not to hear the riot they made. Cargill was among them, trying vainly to make them listen to reason; they cried but the louder at every word he said. But at the first sight

of their mistress there was none left that dared continue the unseemly disturbance; they stood silent in my presence like sheep in the penfold, or like rebellious children that know they have earned a rating, and expect it forthwith. Nor was there one among them ready to answer me when I desired to know why they behaved them so wildly. At last one took courage to murmur under her breath 'that it was very well for me to ask them such a question.'

'Well for me?' I answered her quickly. 'An if it be, what is amiss for you? Am not I a woman like yourself? If it be well for me, what is there to fear for my maids?'

At that the foolish thing fell to shedding tears; but she was none so easy to silence, for all her softness. Presently she took heart to murmur again, 'that I bore such a heart as nothing daunted me.'

'But as for me and the rest,' she went on, gathering courage with the sound of her own voice, 'we go about our work all day trembling for fear; and we lie down at night not knowing what horror may be upon us before the morning's light.'

'Do you so?' said I. 'And if any such horror should come upon the house, shall I be out of it? Shall I not be the very first to suffer, being the head? Sure, if I see no

cause for terror, you and your fellows may keep your minds easy enough.'

Sure, 'twas as if these words woke up anew the clamour that had been stilled, mixed with such words as showed me that the foolish groom had thought it pity to hold his tongue for one little minute, and had no sooner got him downstairs than he had blabbed his errand. Sure, he had infected every soul of them with his mad terror of the Red-shanks as fast as ever the plague runs through a house. The folly of it all angered me so bitterly that I gave them as sound a rating for their fear, which they scarce could help, as ever I did for their idleness, which they could. But it was to no purpose. One broke out a-weeping after another, and nothing would serve them but to be sent to Derry without delay.

'Well,' I told them, 'if 'tis the Red-shanks you're afraid of, you are like enough to meet them if you go to Derry; 'tis the very place they're bound for. But here, what likelihood is there that any men in their senses will go four miles of a roundabout to rabble a house that hath neither the name of riches nor of great store of weapons? You're safe enough here if you would but think it. Go to your beds, and have more respect for God's providence than to think He would smite with danger

and trouble them that know so little how to profit by the same.'

At that Cargill, standing behind me in the doorway, carried his hand to his forehead, after the fashion of a soldier saluting. I saw him out of the corner of mine eye, and turned towards him.

'Brave words, madam,' said he, 'if they mean that danger and trouble will never daunt the heart that can profit by them.'

Faith, I had intended no such meaning, though no doubt the words I had used pointed to it. And at Cargill's salute the strangest feeling passed through my mind, that, having claimed for myself, though unthinkingly, some share of such a quality, I was bound more than ever to shrink from no test that came my way. It passed through my head, and was gone straightway till this moment that I recall the affair to describe it; and yet I nothing doubt but it made me the stiffer to stay in mine own house in spite of counsels of prudence and fears of the faint-hearted.

For their own sakes solely I tried to reason my maids out of their terror, which seemed to me of the sort that makes your terrified horse, for instance, leap from a precipice that will break his neck. But I might as well have debated the thing with the stone of the wall,

as the saying is. Before I left them I had given them leave to quit Cloncally at daybreak; against my will, very surely, but not at all to my discomfiture. Little discernment was needed to perceive that we were nothing weakened, should real danger arise, by the absence of such as could do nothing to avert it but to weep.

At dawn of day they had permission to depart; and at dawn of day they departed, long before the tardy groom thought it possible to be gone upon his master's errand, though that was of so great importance. The men in the yard flouted them for their folly; but what cared they for flouting, that were gone towards city walls and safety? Margery Hamilton and Annot Wilson were the only women that remained in Cloncally but myself; they were of another temper than those tremblers. I looked at my twelve brave men as they went out of the house to their several duties, and truly I thought that we three and Roland were none so badly off; I feared not five times their number of such soldiers as Mr. Phillips described, mine being within walls and they in the open. It seemed a very pity that he should trouble himself and his servants to come to mine aid, that had already a good sufficiency of brave defenders.

It might be nine of the clock when Margery

came to tell me that there was a boy at the door desiring speech of me.

'Like his impudence, too!' she remarked, half to herself. 'A slip of a boy like that to come asking speech with the like of yourself at such an hour of the morning!'

'Do you know who he is,' I asked her, 'or what is like to be his errand?'

'I never cast eyes on him in my life before that I know of,' said she. 'And as to his business, 'tis for your own ear only, if you please. So he told me when I would have brought it to you in a more fitting manner than by the mouth of a little dirty spalpeen like himself.'

Margery tossed up her head, and I thought I divined the cause of her displeasure with the messenger. She was mistaken in saying that it was the first time she had ever cast eyes on him, for all that; for it was the same boy, Gorman O'Cahan, that we had fed and rested in Roland's nursery a month before. I knew him the moment I saw him. He was scarce so lean as he had been, and not near so wan and sickly to look at; but the droll, good-humoured smile was not to be forgotten or mistaken. I called him by his name at once.

'What do you want of me, Gorman O'Cahan?' said I.

At which he broke into that great smile of

his. Certes, the largeness of his mouth makes up for the littleness of his nose and eyes, which yet have something in them that is friendly and faithful.

'Would your ladyship take me to some place where there's none can hear us speak?' said he. 'It's yourself alone that must hear my irrand.'

Margery, at my back, muttered something about a beating; but there was that in the lad's face that spoke of urgency. I took him for a true man, in spite of my tire-woman's displeasure; and so brought him within doors and into the dining-room, shutting the door lest anyone should hearken to that which did not concern him.

No sooner were we alone than my little Irishman's face went as solemn as the face of a bishop; down he dropped on his knees at my feet.

'Oh, me lady!' said he, in a tone to wring the heart, 'do ye wish to save your life? Do ye wish to save the life of the little jantleman? Do ye care anything for the big woman that didn't want to let me inside the door of the house?'

'What do you mean?' I asked him, angry with myself because my heart quivered in my breast, and my voice faltered in my throat.

Mr. Phillips' two letters had no wise fluttered

me; 'twas strange that the first words of a child should have power to move me so greatly.

'Me lady,' said he, 'I'm forbidden to mane a thing, an' sure 'tis little enough I've been told. But I know there's mischief on foot. There's skeans, for I've seen them. An' my mother gave me leave to come here and tell you that, but not a word more; only that if you value your life, you're to beware how you let a man of the Irishry inside your doors, neither in the daytime nor in the night, but specially not at night.'

From a grown person this speech would have moved me to laughter; from a child, in all reason, it should have seemed more trifling still; but, by some unknown power of persuasion, the lad's manifest belief in the shadowy fear he told of so vaguely took hold of me in mine own despite.

Seeing me something mazed, he rose from his knees and came close to me.

''Tis Sunday—Sunday—that's to be the day,' said he, almost in a whisper.

'The day for what?' I asked him sharply.

'Oh, lady dear, 'tis yourself that knows as much as me!' said he, with his earnest face. ''Tisn't to the like of meself they'd tell much; but, musha, haven't I got eyes in my head? an' can't I keep my ears open? They've dropped a word now an' then that I've picked up, an'

that's all, except what my mother told me to tell you—that there's mischief intended; sure, haven't I done it?'

I sat me down upon a chair.

'Where is your mother?' I asked of him.

'At home, sure; where would she be?' answered he, opening his eyes.

'And your father—is he with her?'

'Musha, no!' said he, breaking into his ready grin, 'or it's little you'd a' seen of meself this morning. It's with the soldiers my father is nowadays, an' it's in Derry itself they mane to be this night, sure enough.'

'And have you told me all your message?' I asked him again.

'Ivery word, lady dear—ivery word,' said he earnestly. 'Not a word do I know but what I've told you. There's mischief in the wind, an' it's Sunday that's the day; an' you'll be doin' wrong av you open your doors to *anny* man of the Irish, av he came to you wid nivver such a distressful story. That's all.'

And looking into the lad's earnest face, I saw that it was truly all. All he knew or suspected was either said or glanced at in these words. He saw in my face that I believed him, and once more that grin of his broke over his own, like one that hath prospered in a task whereto he hath set his will and his heart.

'It's meself that'll have to be going now,' said he.

'No,' said I; 'you shall go into the kitchen first and have something to eat.'

''Tis like yourself to ax me!' said the boy; 'but I couldn't do it. It's too long I'm here already. Musha! I might be seen about the place, an' then——'

'And then?' said I. 'Well, what then? What if you were seen about Cloncally?'

'Maybe it's a taste of a skean I'd get myself, for a handsel,' said he.

He smiled as he said it. Care for himself was *like water on a duck's back*, as they say, now that he had cleared his mind of his warning to us.

'But wait a moment,' I said. 'I wish to give you something for a reward for coming so far to bring me this message.'

'Never name it, lady dear!' said the boy anxiously. 'Sure, there's not the thing I'd have taken to let it alone.' And with that was out of the room, and would have been out of the door as quickly, save that it was locked and chained.

Cargill came to my call and opened it. He looked curious and a little stern to boot, and held it in his hand for a moment, as though to give me time for some explanation. But I

spoke not a word to him at that time. I went to the threshold and looked after my little Irish friend; sure, he merited the title that would put himself both to labour and risk for no fee nor reward, save that of doing me some service.

But it was as if the pixies had carried off the lad from my very doorsill. Scarce a moment had passed since the door was opened, and already there was no more sign of him than of a figure rubbed off a slate. I stood and peered before me, and to left and right, into the shining frosty mist; but the little lad was gone as suddenly as any ghost.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE MESSENGER FROM NEWTOWN GOT NO FURTHER BACK THAN TO CLONCALLY.

But through that same frosty haze I could catch the sound of one galloping in haste, riding, as it might be, for his life. That could not be my little messenger, or, if it were, then the pixies had him in very sooth ; for the sound was at a good distance—nigh as far off as it could be to be heard. And it was coming nigher with every hoof-fall, not drawing away into silence. My Irish lad and his strange departure were blotted clean out of my mind, and I listened as though there were nothing else on earth but this newcomer and what his coming should signify. Cargill, smit by the same foreboding, came forth upon the doorsill at my side, peering forth into the mist as though to meet the *ill news halfway*, as the saying is. For the pace was over-speedy to bode of good. He that brings glad tiding rides at his leisure.

I remember that a shudder passed through me from head to foot. 'Twas the chill of the frosty air, nothing more; nor did I so much as fancy that 'twas anything more or more mysterious. But yet that mere bodily shiver seemed to mix itself with the shrinking of the mind from that fear which as yet we knew not, but which was speeding toward us, nearer with every second of time.

Speeding it was, and that at a great pace, for now could be discerned a certain labouring in the rhythm of the gallop, like the gait of a horse that is cruelly over-ridden. And it was to Cloncally it was hastening—where else? There is none other house near to which 'twas even possible it should be bound. Even as we listened upon the threshold, the rider took the turning to the courtyard, and the sound ceased upon the instant. Cargill was gone from my side as hastily, darting through the house like any boy, to and out of the courtyard door, to meet the messenger that had ridden so hard.

I came within doors like one in a dream. 'Ill news travels fast!' I said to myself, as I shut the door and tried to bar it; but the bolt was over-heavy for my hand. That which the Irish lad had told me not ten minutes before mixed itself in my thought with that which I knew was at hand. In the merest superstitious

folly, mine effort to secure the door seemed to my mind as an omen ; should I succeed, then, I thought, we should weather the storm that threatened ; should I fail, then we must succumb to the same. I put my whole strength to the bolt, and it shot into its socket with a rusty growl. And my spirits, however unwarrantably, threw off incontinent the gloom that had begun to weigh them down. Yet, as I turned into the dining-room, I found myself muttering that 'Sunday was the day.'

Presently I heard Cargill's voice in the passage without, encouraging someone with the assurance of safety; the next moment he was at the door of the room, half leading, half supporting a man that clung to his arm like one bereft of strength. This was none other than Colonel Phillips' messenger returned from Derry. Truly, if the man had looked fool-faced and fearful the night before, this morning he was ten times worse. His tongue refused to form the words he would have uttered ; his knees shook so that he could not have stood before me, save for the help of Cargill's arm. I had heard before of men struck dumb and helpless with fear ; now I saw it for the first time, and the sight was little to my liking.

'The Irish—the massacre' was all he could babble forth ; and then again, in answer to *all*

my questions, 'the Irish' and 'the massacre.' Sure, I thought nought but that Derry lay in ruins, and every creature there a corpse in his blood, to see the man so amazed.

'*What* massacre?' I asked him sharply, for perhaps the fourth or fifth time. 'Who have been slain? Be a man; pluck up a heart, and tell us.'

Cargill, out of all patience, loosed his hold of the coward creature's arm, and fell instead to shaking him by the shoulder. He dropped upon his knees at my feet, having no power to sustain himself upright; but, sure, it was as if Cargill had shaken some more words out of his throat, for they came with a rush—a thing so absurd that even at such a moment it set me smiling.

'The massacre that is to be on Sunday,' said he; and then broke into a kind of wail: 'Oh dear! oh dear! there won't be a man, woman, or child of the Englishry alive on Monday morning!'

As sharp a spasm of anger as ever I knew passed through me as I took in the meaning of what he said. An evil that was merely threatened, a danger that might be averted, to put a man into so deadly terror! I could have beaten him for his folly.

'A massacre that only is to be,' said I, 'and

you are feared to death!' My voice trembled for very contempt as I spoke to him. 'Why, man, there be two whole days to take order against it! Be a man, if you would not be thrust forth from my doors like a hound; pluck up a heart, and tell us what you heard in Derry to put you in such a taking.'

But, Lord! it was as if my threat had knocked his senses all astray once more.

'Madam! madam!' cried he, catching at my skirts, and bursting into tears; 'oh, my lady, for God's love! Oh, don't send me out of the house while the Red-shanks be upon the road! Let me stay here till they be out of the way.'

I could not restrain myself from spurning the whining craven with my foot, not enduring to be touched by so base a creature. Cargill, that had with difficulty refrained from speech all this time, broke out at last.

'Saw ever mortal such a coward?' said he, with indignation. 'Madam, give me but your leave to carry him into the barn. Tim and I will give him somewhat to moan for. I warrant I'll make him fear me as much as any Irish mob; and then perhaps he'll see fit to tell us what has put him into such a fright.'

This terrible threat, whereat I could have smiled, had some effect upon the groom. He

saw that there was no indulgence to be looked for from either one of us, and at last he seemed to make some effort to command his scattered wits.

'Oh, Master Cargill, sir!' said he, still weeping, 'had you been the bearer of my news into Derry, and there heard news ten times worse —one terror on the back of another—perhaps you'd have had the sense knocked out of your head as well as me, for all so high as you hold it.'

'I'd part with it, and welcome,' said Cargill, forgetful of my presence, 'before I'd demean myself like you.'

'Silence, Cargill!' said I, displeased. 'And you, sirrah, if you can so far command your fool fears, tell us your news, and let us be judges of their awfulness. Nay'—drawing back, as he put forth his hands to lay hold of my skirts once more—'be assured that if you do not so, and that instantly, I will cast you from the door within the hour. Ay, though all the Ultoghs in the province were there with their skeans. Stand up on your feet, man! Stop whimpering like a maid, and speak out what you know!'

At that, as if my words had wrought a very miracle, and cast out a dumb devil of fear, sure enough my man stands up on his feet, and

begins to rub his eyes with his knuckles—a sorry sight indeed.

'My lady,' he began, speaking more like a rational being than I had heard him yet, 'you know that I rid from this place to Derry before break of day this morning with my master's letter to Mr. Alderman Norman about the Red-shank soldiers.'

'Ah,' muttered Cargill at my back, 'I should like to know how you came to be so well aware of what your master had writ in his letter, you——'

I took no notice of him, but listened to the groom.

'I delivered that letter, madam,' said he, 'and was bid to go into Mr. Alderman's kitchen with his servants to breakfast. I was refreshed, and was at the very point to depart, being in the hall awaiting Mr. Alderman's pleasure if he had any despatch to send to my master, when there comes to the door another Alderman, one Mr. Tomkyn, and inquires for Mr. Norman with a very fearful face on business of the last importance. So I—I—waited,' he went on, becoming confused.

'You waited, I warrant,' said Cargill behind me, in the same low voice—'oh yes, you waited; not a doubt of it! You thought as you'd carry home some account of that same

important business, but not for Colonel Phillip's ear—oh no! *I* know your sort!'

'Cargill!' I said, turning round.

He begged my pardon.

'I waited,' the man continued, 'and, sure, madam, there wasn't long to wait; Mr. Alderman's servant was not even bid from the room while Mr. Tomkyn opened his business. 'Tis all over the city by this time.'

'Well, now, and what is it, after all?' I asked him, desiring to cut short the commentary and be at the text.

'Madam, an it please you, 'tis what I told you before,' said he.

'Heard one ever the like?' said I, out of all patience. 'Must we drag the words out of you with punishment, as Cargill threatened? Why, you've told us nothing yet—nothing at all.'

'Ah, then, my lady,' said he, ''tis the massacre! Oh, me lady, 'tis the massacre. The Irish have fixed to slay man, woman, and child of the English; they're going to rise up everywhere throughout the province, and what can we do against so many? Sunday—Sunday's the day.' Again he began to shed tears. 'There won't be a soul of the English left alive by Monday morning.'

I stood silent. This tallied with the warning of Gorman O'Cahan.

'Tis news as sure,' went on the groom, 'as Mr. Phillips' to you of the Red-shanks; and them I saw with my own eyes. You will see if they be not in Derry by nightfall.'

I would have questioned that, if I could, but it seemed even too likely. A regiment duly commissioned of his Majesty to garrison the city! sure and indeed they must be admitted, were they never such scullogues. 'Sunday was the day,' said the groom; 'Sunday was the day,' Gorman had said before him. Faith, it seemed all too likely that, Derry being a place of strength whereto many might fly for safety, Lord Antrim's Red-shanks had been ordered there for the very purpose of putting it in possession of the Irish. No doubt it was in their commission to put man, woman and child of the citizens to the sword. Was ever such a treason on the part of a monarch before? and this towards a town that had shown no fault towards him, save that of professing the religion he had sworn at his coronation to protect and allow!

Even as I pondered it, I cast about in my mind for some circumstance that might give the lie to all these warnings and fears, but there was none—not one. To the contrary, mine unbelief sank overwhelmed beneath the load of evidence; one proof after another sprang up to confound me, out of things that were

within mine own knowledge. Sure, I have already set down many of them in these pages; it needs not to repeat them over and over again.

But that we should sit down quiet and submit to our fate!—be slain like sheep in the shambles, as this fool groom would, were he left to his own helpless terrors! If the King's treason was difficult to credit, this was clean impossible. I knew my countrymen too well. And sure, even I myself had some duty to discharge towards our defence.

'Sirrah,' said I to the groom, 'here is no question of remaining at Cloncally till the Redshanks be safe in Derry. You must ride on instantly to Mr. Phillips' and give the alarm at home.'

'I could not, madam—I could not indeed,' said the pitiful creature; to call him man is sure to offer an insult to those that are such. 'I'd be dead of fear or ever I got there.'

It was even too evident that he spoke truth, and that, should we send him from Cloncally by main force, he would make no scruple of finding another shelter, rather than risk himself on the open country.

'Saw one ever such a chicken-heart?' said I in anger. 'But word must be got to our good friend at Newtown, and that immediate. Will

you ride with it, Cargill? and will you set off within the hour?'

'Why, madam,' said he, 'I would never think twice of it, were it not for leaving you a man the weaker, in case these rumours be truth.'

'You may be here again by nightfall, or soon thereafter,' said I; but presently began to ponder how he was, so to put it, the captain of my little garrison; I could spare him but grudgingly. 'Is there any of the men that may be sent in your stead?' said I to him; 'for send on the news we must.'

We fell to telling over the men; there was none but had his own post and his own duty, and there were but just enough, all told, to man the house sufficiently. But on the other hand there was no reason to apprehend any attack that day, or the night following. It seemed best upon the whole that Cargill himself should go, and that at once, to be back the sooner; I taking upon myself, during his absence, his duty of oversight.

No sooner was this decided than qualms and tremors began to vex me; of such fickle stuff am I made—hot one moment upon a project, and cold the next. Being left alone, I fell to pacing the room from side to side, and putting it to myself, in what case should I be if harm befell Cargill upon his journey—he that was the

best of my men, and his master's trusted servant? A single horseman upon the road, I saw him in my fancy beset by the rabble of Ultoghs, wild from the hills; scarce to be controlled by their officers, even were these disposed to protect the wayfarer. The poor groom's fears began to seem less despicable, now that one whose life I valued was about to take his place. But what should hinder him, after all, to take the bridle-path across the hills? I asked myself this, and was something eased in mind, for it was little likely he should meet them there.

Yet even so, the room grew all too strait for me; I went forth into the hall, and thence to the door of the court. I looked through the little window of one pane that is beside it. There yet stood the groom's horse as he had been left of his rider; it was extremely careless of my man Timothy, and I was angered. So good a beast, and not so much as a quarter-cloth thrown over him after such a race. But he was still steaming after it; it might be there was yet little harm done. 'It were nothing less than a charity,' I thought, 'if someone should ride him quietly home.' But Cargill was overheavy for him.

I tried the door, which was fast locked, and the key gone; this was one of Cargill's precautions, who was by way of having little con-

fidence in the prudence of the women ; no doubt he had it at that moment in his pocket. I must remember, I thought, to get it from him ere he left the house. But the first thing was to see the good horse cared for, and to that end I must get out of the house into the yard. The front-door, as I had secured it, I could open it ; and so with some little difficulty I did, and went out, closing it after me.

I had made but two steps when I thought I heard a sound at the door I had that moment closed ; I turned and looked at it. It was not the door that had sprung open, that was fast enough ; but in the shallow recess of the little window that is to the left of it, pressed close to the wall to escape observation, there was a little ragged figure that I knew—Gorman O'Cahan. He came forth as soon as he saw himself observed.

'Me lady,' said he, 'I heard the horse coming, an' I thought I'd stay awhile in case 'twas somebody that might have a word or two to say to meself.'

It flashed upon my mind that here was a way out of my perplexity. This child, I thought, would run small risk were he to take my message.

'Gorman,' I said, 'you have brought a message to me this morning. Will you take another

from me to a friend of mine before you go home?'

'Sure, lady,' said the lad earnestly, 'it's proud an' happy I'd be to do ye the laste little service in life.'

'Can you ride?' I asked him.

'Faith, me lady, I hardly know!' said he. 'I can stick on to a garron, anny way.'

'That will do, I think,' said I, smiling in answer to his smile; for Mr. Phillips' horse was scarce in the mood to quarrel with his rider, and I meant that Gorman should ride him home. 'Do you know Colonel Phillips' house at Newtown-Limavady?' I asked him.

'I do not,' replied he; 'but it'll be a quare place av I can't find it out. I know where Newtown lies, anny way.'

I took the lad within doors to be fed while I writ my letter. Cargill was ready for the same; but I explained to him, he marvelling greatly the while, how I had found another messenger. While I was writing, he went to see Mr. Phillips' horse made ready for his journey; I could hear him where I sat rating Timothy for his neglect.

We asked no leave of the cowardly groom, nor, indeed, spoke a word to him about the matter. But in a very few minutes we had set a rider of another temper on his horse's back.

On the bridle-path to Newtown there was little fear of his falling in with the Red-shanks, who would certainly keep to the road. And should he be challenged by any not a friend for his possession of so good a beast, which was the one risk he ran, we must even trust that his own good wit would provide him with an answer. The wit of the animal, we knew, might be trusted to find the way which the rider knew not. But with every good hope I could set before my mind, my heart would not be forbid to shrink as I saw horse and rider depart.

I take no shame to confess that I went straight to my chamber, and on my knees besought our Lord to direct them safely; thinking that He who had in old times condescended to guide brute beasts upon their way, so to save His Ark from the hands of the heathen, would pardon a woman in trouble that asked him to do the like once more to save a household from destruction. And that His hand was around my little messenger, I nothing doubt; for though I knew it not till later, he and his steed came safe to their destination.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW THOSE AT CLONCALLY WERE TERRIFIED BY THE CHALLENGE OF A FRIEND.

Though oppress'd in mind at the thought of the toilsome journey undertaken at my instance by one who would accept no reward at my hands; no, not so much as a single coin—'for,' said he, 'what account could I give of it if 'twere found upon me?'—yet was I more heartened thereby than cast down. No doubt but it was the merest folly to set store by such trifles; I thought shame, even at the moment, that they should move me up or down, yet move me they did; and I that had felt the stirring of the great door-bolt as a promise of escape from threatened peril had sure more reason to look upon the appearance of this friend from the ranks of our foes as a very earnest and assurance of help in time of need. It came into my head an hundred times that day how he had come to mine aid in the very

nick of time, and at every remembrance with a fresh lightening of the spirits, so that I found my mind rendered equal to the contemplation of so many and such disquieting messages.

Nor was I left for long time to ponder them by myself alone. 'Twas yet early in the day when I had two visitors, one of them marvelling to find himself unlooked for. Sure, if he was unexpected, he was but the welcomer for that—as welcome as dawn to the wanderer, or cock-crow to him that is haunted by a spectre. Sure, I knew not myself so faint-hearted till I had the arm of a strong man whereon to lean.

That strong man was Mr. Browning, who had ridden out of Derry to bring me notice of the reports that were afoot in the city concerning the massacre planned by the Irish. By the time he started the city was gone clean mad with fear and rage, so that he knew not what manner of tale would have grown out of the truth by the time it should reach Cloncally.

His wife rode with him, not enduring her husband to be out of her sight among unknown dangers. 'Twas the first time that ever I met this lady, who hath but lately come to Derry from Greencastle. She seemed older than her husband, but a pleasant woman, and one I was ere long to see much of, though then we knew

neither that nor many other things that were presently to befall us.

I took it for no small proof of friendship on her part and her husband's that they should trust themselves upon so lonely a road as that from the Waterside of Derry to Cloncally, with such a rumour in the air; and so I told them, but Mr. Browning made very light of it.

'Why now,' said he, 'didn't you hear me promise to Captain Hamilton to have a care of you in his absence, and do you any service that lay in my power? Faith, if 'tis ever to lie in my power at all, it seems like to be betwixt this and Sunday.'

That set us a-going, and, to my shame be it spoken, we were presently deep in the subject —the whole wide subject—of the peril wherein we stood, with all of our kinsmen and countrymen, and what were best to be done in these emergencies; and that before ever my guests had sat down, or Mrs. Browning had laid aside her riding-hood. 'Twas one that bore a deal of discussion, however, and was scarce more clear an hour later, when we were seated all together around the fire. Derry, with Lord Antrim's Red-shanks for garrison, seemed but a poor refuge to flee to; to quit Cloncally for such a shelter was like to be a case of *out of the frying-pan into the fire.* And yet, what could

my dozen of men do against such a mob of Irishry as might come against us—as was certain to come against us, if Derry should be so handled as was feared? A black look-out was our brightest, and ever the blacker the more we looked at it.

After much debate, the wisest course appeared to be to remain where we were for the present, until it should be seen how the Regiment of Raps demeaned itself in Derry. This being decided, and likewise another matter that was no small comfort to me—to wit, that Mr. Browning and his wife should remain my guests till Monday—there seemed little else to be done than to eat and drink and make as merry as circumstances would allow. For now it was drawing towards the four hours; twilight was deepening into nightfall, though scarce as yet to dark.

At Cargill's request, Mr. Browning was gone with him to make the round of the house, and to see that the defences were all in order; there was a distant sound of bolting and slamming that told us that the rest of the men were come within doors for the night. Of a sudden there came about the house a mighty unpleasing noise—the noise of a multitude of men; steps and voices so disorderly as it made me quake to hear them. Presently came a great knocking at the back-door. I ran with Mrs. Brown-

ing to an upper window that commands the courtyard. How she felt at that moment I know not. For myself, I take little shame to confess that the blood buzzed in mine ears like the sound of the bees in summer, and my heart beat in my throat as though I were choking. For we nothing doubted but these were the men that had it in charge to take our lives, and that it was upon that very business they were come.

The knocking upon the door was repeated; then a loud voice commanded 'Silence!' in a tone of anger. At that the hubbub a little quieted; but still the air was alive with a rustling, as of men that crowd together and speak in whispers. At that moment, and as I tried to hold my breath to listen the better, there came from the nursery the joyous cry of 'Mother! mother!'

'Twas the hour of the day when Roland is always brought to me. Sure, any woman may think out of her own heart with what a pain I took my son in mine arms the next moment, not knowing but it was the last time I should ever hold him there.

By the time I had stilled his prattle, and was able to listen once more to what was going on below me in the court, it was come to a parley. Of that so little could be heard where I stood

that I ran downstairs as speedily as I might, taking my son in mine arms. My guest I clean forgot in my great fear, but she followed me without a bidding, and we came to the door together.

Here was Cargill, with musket loaded and levelled, at the little opened window, speaking to one without. Mr. Browning was at his elbow, listening to every word.

The voice of him they spoke with had nothing of bluster or arrogance, being a kind of beggarly whine. Before ever I heard a word I knew from the cozening tone that 'twas a favour he was asking. Faith! the singing in mine ears and hammering in my pulses abated upon the instant. Yet I remembered that Gorman's words had glanced at some pretext of mendicancy or sudden sickness, to gain an entrance within our premises, and drew near the window in a frame of mind as little charitable as ever I felt in my life.

The spokesman, whoever he might be, of the crowd in the yard had doubtless been making some claim of old acquaintance with Cargill, who, for his part, was denying the same without any scruple.

'Never crossed words with you before in my life!' were the first words I heard, to which there was some soft-voiced blarneying answer,

whereof I heard no word. 'Sold me a horse, did you?' said Cargill quickly. 'I remember ye now. A wretched beast as ever I backed! You cheated me most abominably; and I believe 'twas a stolen horse at that. I'd like to know what I owe you for that, unless 'tis a hiding.'

Again I lost the answer; so I came closer to the window, pressing my child's cheek to my neck to keep him quiet.

'How many are there with you?' asked Cargill sharply.

'Two score, maybe,' said the voice without, a true Irish voice, the keynote thereof the desire to curry favour. 'There or thereabouts: maybe a man or two more.'

'Here's a modest asking!' said Cargill. 'Supper and lodging for two score men, or more, and all on the strength of having cheated me with a horse two years ago. No, indeed, my man. Begone to Derry, where you're entitled to room and rations.'

'Troth!' said the other, something less smoothly, 'had we gotten what was our rights in Derry, 'tis not ourselves would have troubled you to-night.'

At that we all pressed nigher to the window, so that Cargill's musket was pushed through it.

'Ach! Kape that to yourself, will you?'

said the man in his natural tone, startled out of his artificial cringing by the sight of it.

And at that, though my first thought was how little need there was to fear one whom the mere sight of a musket so daunted, yet my second was that cowards be ever the cruellest foes, once they know themselves to have the mastery.

'What do you mean?' questioned Cargill. 'Are there over-many of you for your quarters, or what's the matter?'

A sort of inarticulate growl forced itself from the man, in his own despite.

'What is it I mane, is it you're askin'?' said he. 'Ach, thin, 'tis the outside of the gate they've had the face to show his Majesty's troops—no less. Bad luck to them! The divvle fly away wid them for an unmannerly pack, as they are!'

'Nay, but what do you mean, after all?' exclaimed Cargill. 'Have they turned you out of the city?'

'Tur-rned us out?' answered the man angrily—'tur-rned us out, is it? No, begorra! there's not the men in their skins that would have done that same. No, bedad! but it's *kept* us out they've done, bad cess to thim! Shut the gates in our very faces, bedad! without so much as a "by your lave" to us. Tur-rned

us out, did ye say? No, but they had no more manners than to send us packing from the gates as if 'twas a pack of thieves they took us for; and promised to tur-rn wan of the great guns upon us, bedad! if we made not the better speed out av their sight!'

'Oh, brave hearts!' said Mr. Browning, turning toward us with sparkling eyes. 'Oh, how well have they deserved of their country this day!'

'Fegs! ye may well say that,' said a voice behind us.

And, turning, sure enough there was a perfect concourse at our backs—Margery and Annot Wilson, the white-visaged groom peering forth from the kitchen with starting eyes, and Andrew Wilson, who had spoken. His post was at the window of the dining-room, which he had forsaken to listen to the parley. Faith, it needed but one scowl from Cargill to send him skurrying back to it quicker than he had left it.

Outside the window, the leader's account of the treatment they had received at Derry gate had raised a perfect tumult of murmuring and of imprecations, so that he could neither make himself heard of us nor of them. At last he fell to cursing them roundly.

'And how,' said he, 'do you think I'll

persuade them to let us have shelter and food to put in our empty bellies if you frighten them with such a hellish noise ?'

At that Cargill made as though he fell into a passion of laughter.

'Fair and softly, Master Captain!' he called out—'fair and softly, sir, with your frightening. I would have you to know that we be men enough here to laugh at your beggarly two score of recruits. But what token have you to give us that 'tis the truth you're telling us, and no lie ? And where be the rest of the regiment ? You be ten times two score, I warrant, all told. Are the rest of them in Derry, or wandering men like yourselves ?'

'Divvle a man of thim's in Derry, anny way,' replied the man whom Cargill had addressed by the style of 'captain,' and, indeed, he had so professed himself before we came to the window. We afterwards found that he actually held this rank in the Red-shank regiment. Heavens! what a creature to hold a king's commission—one that had been a seller of horses to grooms and such-like people, and, as Cargill informed us, shrewdly suspected of horse-stealing to boot!

Between hunger and fatigue he was finely cowed by the time we had to do with him, and fell to protesting by all the saints he could call

to mind that he had told us nothing but the simple truth. I had bethought me more than once or twice, while he was speaking, of the store of ready-dressed victual I had in the house; and at this point, hearing that the Irish captain was gone from protesting to imploring, I beckoned to Mr. Browning to follow me into the dining-room, meaning to tell him what I had done, and to hear his mind upon the matter, though, truly, had it been other than mine own, I doubt I had gone counter to it. For the men, if what their leader said was true, must be nigh to desperate with hunger. What could be looked for from such but violence of all kinds? Or what else should we deserve at their hands should we refuse relief to their necessity?

I told him in a very few words of the store of victual I had by me. He, on his part, was scarce longer in bestowing upon me the counsel I had asked. One or two shrewd questions put to Cargill, anent the tale of the precious Red-shank captain, convinced him that there was little reason to doubt the same. To be sure, 'twas a better thing than we could have hoped to hear; 'tis ever easy to credit that which we desire in our hearts.

'And where would you feed them?' he asked of me next.

'In the great barn,' I answered. 'There is room enough for twice as many as two score; 'twere no great task, neither, to set the provisions there ready for them. And they might sleep there afterward; there is plenty of straw; it were better lying, at least, than under the hedges. And into the house will I let none of them.'

'No, truly,' said he, with a smile. 'I was something afraid lest your charity should propose to let them come within the doors to sup.'

'And after that,' said I, 'you need not put your advice in words that shall be any plainer. 'Tis clear you are of one mind with me, and mean that the hungry shall be fed, be they never such scoundrels.'

At that both he and his wife fell a-smiling; I smiled too, for very lightness of heart.

'Let us keep them waiting no longer than can be helped,' said he. 'Where is the larder?'

Where was the larder indeed? Where, but at the further side of the courtyard? All these hungry, undisciplined ruffians were between the house and it. 'Tis a very ill position for a larder; and so for the first time I perceived, while I was telling the same to Mr. Browning.

'But surely,' said he, 'you keep not your store of provisions so far from your kitchen?'

'Faith, but we do,' said I.

'Tis an error, and a great one,' said he. 'Not a deadly one, in this instance, since the men are already cowed, and are but scantily armed. But were they the bitter mob of fanatics we had reason to look for, in what case had you been a day or two hence? 'Tis an error you will never fall into again, I dare warrant you.'

And with that he began to give such orders to Cargill as blanched my cheek once more, and his wife's as well. Yet we stood silent beside him, both the one and the other; when this man issued an order there was none that dared open his mouth to protest against it. Cargill received them with a bow, and went forthwith to gather the men, each from the window he guarded. Then Mr. Browning turned to me, with a grave face indeed.

'Dare you, madam,' asked he, 'be left in the house alone with your women while we men divide their portions to the Irish?'

'Dare I? Oh yes,' said I. 'If your wife hath no fear, no more have I. But surely there is no need for you to leave us?'

'Why,' said he, 'that we'll see presently. How many men are we, all told—twenty?'

'Fourteen,' said I. 'And of these one is an arrant coward; he must be left within doors. He would do nothing among the Irishmen but

to weep and quake. They would be put in heart to fall upon us should they once see him.'

'Thirteen, then,' said he—'thirteen, counting myself? Yes. Then, madam, we are not a man too many for the work; there's no saying what a mob of starving men may do once they see food within their reach for the snatching. No, we must be enough to keep them in check; so many to carve, and so many to guard the carvers.'

'Yes,' said I, 'but *are* you enough to hold so great a number in check? I doubt it. Were it not better to deliver the key of the larder to that captain of theirs, and let them use my provision as they list? What is the victual—what is all that is in Cloncally—compared to a single life?'

'There were no surer course,' said he, 'to start them a-marauding. Bethink you, madam, that there is as much danger—ay, more; ten times more—in any seeming fearfulness as in any boldness when dealing with a rabble. Ay, in such a case foolhardiness is your true caution; I am sure of it. Nay, madam, be not so cast down.' I was so, and cared not to disguise it. 'We run into little danger; the men intend no violence. We be well armed to boot, and they neither have proper weapons nor are skilled to use them if they had.'

And here Roland, who had looked with wondering eyes from one to another all this time and held his tongue—stilled by the pressure of my hand—lifted up his small sweet voice, and bade me never fear.

'*Me* will go wis ze rest of ze men,' said he, putting his hand in Mr. Browning's, who lifted him up and kissed him.

'You will stay in the house and take care of mammy and the other lady,' said he—a charge which Roland proudly accepted.

Here Cargill returned to the room to tell us that the men were now all assembled.

'Time too,' said the old soldier briskly. 'They in the yard are growing clamorous. But what,' said he next moment, 'if another band of these masterless men should find their way to Cloncally, perhaps to the front of the house? Madam cannot be left to parley with them by herself.'

'Twas a new fear, and none could call it an unfounded one.

'I have it,' said I. We were now in the hall, where were Captain Hamilton's weapons hanging on the wall, his hunting-gear as well. I took a horn from its place. 'I can wind this,' said I, 'well enough. Should we have need of a man's help I will blow it, one blast; should we need you all, thrice in quick succession.'

'A good signal, and well thought of,' said Mr. Browning. 'One blast, then, for one man; three, if we be all required.'

And then, with scarce a gesture of leave-taking, he fell to marshalling the men, each in his place. Then came Annot Wilson forth from the kitchen, bringing the cressets ready kindled; they had not been hung up in the courtyard by the time the Irishmen beset the house. The men took them whose duty it was to tend them every night.

Next there was a short parley at the window, Mr. Browning being himself the spokesman on our behalf; he stipulated that all the men of the party should pile their arms in a corner of the yard, to which they made no objection, understanding it to be the condition of their receiving a meal of meat. And then Annot Wilson (that is as calm in time of danger as any man ever I saw in my life) began to undo the bolts of the courtyard door; she held it, once 'twas set wide, while the brave men filed out by twos; those going first that had the cressets. Mr. Browning went last by himself, bearing his drawn sword in his hand; he turned him upon the threshold, with a little gesture of farewell; and so was gone out of our sight.

When the noise of the drawing of bolts and

turning of keys was over, the courtyard was almost silent, save for a little sound of trampling and calling at the further side, where were the barn and the larder. But it was nothing to alarm the faintest of heart. But just as we were leaving the passage, thinking that all was now in order in the court, Timothy, the groom, called without and asked leave to put the great mastiff Nero into the house; he so tugged at his chain and growled, it seemed, that they were put in fear lest he should break it; then, should he fall upon the strangers, it might provoke bad blood and a riot difficult to quell.

It had truly been a day of sudden alarms—from dawn to dusk one unlooked-for thing had come so fast on the back of another that I suppose I was become hardened; for sure and certain it is that now a feeling of confidence took possession of me, and spread from me to my guest and my women; as if the worst had come that was like to come, and was none so awful, when all was said. Mrs. Browning was able to smile at me again, though the situation of her husband was one that would have daunted many a woman. Presently she came with me into the nursery, where, between us, we put Roland to bed, Margery being occupied below, with Annot, in preparing the supper and

the table. In truth, my worst unhappiness at that moment was to think that neither of my guests had tasted bite or sup since they were come into the house. It was now not to be mended, however, save by hastening the supper, which was a-doing.

Scarce was Roland's head upon his pillow, when his eyes were closed—so great a thing it is to be a child, and have no comprehension of peril. We came then below to the dining-room. We had left the great mastiff snuffing about in every corner. By this time he had completed his search, and was laid down at length just within the door of the dining-room. When we came into that room, and sat down to wait for Mr. Browning's return, he changed his place to the side of the chair I took. He seemed restless. I put my hand upon his neck to quiet him, and it did, for soon he dropped his nose upon his paws, and appeared to fall asleep, like Roland.

We were fallen into a musing silence, listening, I believe, for the incoming of the men, when suddenly my dog lifts his nose into the air with a low growl—it had been a bark the next moment, save that I dropped my hand again upon his neck, stilling him. But he kept his attitude of listening, and we fell into the

same ; but that which was perceived by the finer sense of the brute was blank silence to us. In another minute he sprang to his feet, I still checking him ; then in the hush of the empty house came a distant clatter of dishes and murmur of the women's voices in the kitchen. But it was not that which had aroused my dog ; and that there was something was, alas ! only too evident, for his hair was all a-bristle on his back, and for all my soothing he would not stop his low rumbling growl, which is a sound to give pause to any that hears it.

In another moment we could hear distinctly steps upon the path ; steps of but one or two persons, methought, but stealthy, and therefore fearful. Sure, in that moment I felt as never before the passion of the words of Agag to Samuel, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past ?' But one minute ago so confident, and now plunged back again into worse fear than ever ; 'twas bitter to bear ! We rose with one consent, and slipped out of the room. I went close to the great door, to listen if I might hear aught to guide me. Mrs. Browning, with the heart of a soldier, went to tell the women that they must leave their women's duty, and become men for the nonce.

We had not spoken a single word to each

other, acting in concert by a like impulse; but yet the men without must have heard some sound to render them the carefuller, for all again was silence as I listened at the door. Then came the very slightest, softest rubbing against the little window beside it, wherefrom one may challenge a stranger in troubled times. A kind of horror fell upon me, to think that someone was trying to peer through it into the lighted hall. It was shuttered fast, but there be chinks in the shutter, and a hole as well for the gun. The dog was at my knee; I could feel him trembling with eagerness, but he was bid to silence, and obeyed, uttering no sound at all. Then Mrs. Browning came back into the hall; she took the hunting-horn from its place as she passed, and brought it to me. Annot Wilson and Margery followed her from the kitchen, and the poor trembling groom followed them for sheer desire of company.

It had occurred to me before that 'twere well to challenge the intruders, 'Friend or foe?' before recalling my men from their task; but I had dismissed the thought upon a moment's consideration, since to utter a challenge in a woman's voice were but to provoke violence. But the moment this groom came in my sight, I determined he should do me that office, since

he could do naught else. The stand of arms was ready to my hand. I took therefrom a musket and clapped it into his shaking hand; then I ordered him to unshutter the loophole, level the musket, and question the newcomers. He was nigh to dropping the musket in his terror. He was opening the fool mouth of him to beseech and protest, but I put a speedy end to that. I snatched a loaded pistol from the stand, and clapt it to his ear.

'If you do not as I order you this instant, said I in a very fierce whisper, 'may God have mercy on your soul, for I'll blow your brains out!'

Later, when the terror was past, I scarce could forgive myself for so harsh a threat; but at the moment it steadied my trembler, and I had no sooner seen the effect of it than I gave him another dose. For as he began with trembling hands to unshutter the loophole, 'Take you a good full breath,' I told him, 'and speak out boldly; for if you falter, your last moment has come!'

At this moment Mrs. Browning touched my arm, and pointed to the mastiff, that was behaving very strangely. The bristling of his coat had ceased, and he was snuffing at the door with a quivering ear and tail. A wild

thought flashed through my mind as I saw it, to be dismissed as quick. There be many Irish coming and going at Cloncally from the village. It might well be that the dog should know the newcomer, and yet he be no friend; yet that and my pistol together put some heart into the groom. He threw open the loophole with a firmer hand than I could have believed, stuck the musket through it, and asked in something like a man's voice, Who was there? Friend or foe?

But ah! can any that shall read this picture to himself what was my feeling when I heard the answer? 'Twas in the voice that I know best in all the world, and love best, but not a note of hope was in it.

'Ah, Canning, what did I tell you?' said he.

With that the barrel of the musket was seized and dragged as quick as thought from the nerveless hands that held it.

'Ah, you scoundrels!' shouted he in such a tone of grief and rage as I hope never to hear again. 'Open the door, will ye, and answer me what you've done with my wife and child.'

Faith! the first word was scarce out of his mouth ere I was dragging at the bolts and chains, the women helping me, and the dog hindering with his eagerness. Before Captain Hamilton could comprehend the situation, I

was hanging upon his neck, laughing, crying, hugging him, thanking God—Margery and Annot well-nigh as distraught as I with very joy. And so our greatest fear was turned into a happiness that for a little time was near as hard to bear.

Then what a questioning and answering, and what confusion in the same! None of us fit to answer for the desire to ask, nor able to put a clear question for our eagerness to make explanations. Scarce can I marvel to think of it, neither; sure, a cup can be filled no fuller than to the brim, and my mind and heart were even like to overflow with this great mercy of my husband's happy return; at the very moment—oh, the very moment!—when, had a wish been granted me, the prayer of my soul had been for his presence.

Dear! every other thought was driven clean out of my head; I took none to greet his companion (Mr. Canning of Garvagh), nor yet to make him known to Mrs. Browning, whom he had never met till then. It was she who a little recalled me to composure; for, seeing that Mr. Phillips' groom so handled the musket that 'twas become a danger to all of us, she very coolly took it from him, and put it in its place upon the stand. Whereat I was put in remembrance of my pistol, that in my sudden madness

of joy I had cast down, loaded as it was, upon the settle; and from the thought of that sprang up the thought of the rest I was neglecting.

If ever there was happiness upon this earth, 'twas round our supper-table this night; and with happiness came even mirth and gaiety, so great was the rebound of our spirits from despair and gloom. 'Twas like the sudden breaking-forth of the sun when the heavens had threatened a tempest. Yet, sure, the gloom of the thunder-clouds was scarce abated; scarce, for aught we knew, was the bursting of the storm delayed. The barn was full of men that we knew for un-friends to every soul of our race, and that had been furnished, by the treachery of them that should have been our protectors, with both equipment and opportunity to show their enmity in the deadliest way. But yet they were not in Derry; that was some comfort. Opportunity, at least, had been snatched from their grasp, and that, had we known it at the moment, by the gallantry and promptitude of a very few and inconsiderable persons. Yet the treachery remained, and was not to be denied; and what harm that treachery might work us yet, sure, thought could hardly fathom. Nay, had we known the straits it was to bring us to, there had been little merrymaking in our heads that night, for all the mercy we had

experienced. Perhaps the choicest mercy of all was this, that the future was covered from our eyes, in such sort that a respite was possible from the wearing anxiety which yet beset our pillows, ready to lay hold of us once more at the breaking of the day.

END OF VOL. I.

BILLING AND SONS, PRINTERS, GUILDFORD.

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